BRILL'S COMPANION TO THE STUDY OF GREEK COMEDY



Edited by

Gregory W. Dobrov

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On the cover: © Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University. Photo by Bruce M. White, 2008: Red-figure pelike with an actor dressed as a bird. Greek, Attic. ca 430–420 BC. Terracotta. Carlos Collection of Ancient Art. 2008.4.1

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With the invitation to produce Brill's "Companion to Greek Comedy" I found myself in the role of χορoδιδάσκαλος: I had been granted a chorus and competition at the festival was a rousing challenge. The first volume of this sort that I recall seeing was the *Companion to Homer* by Wace and Stubbings published nearly fifty years ago. It was a classic of its time, all too easily forgotten in a landscape now crowded with props for various genres in need of companionship. Since there is still nothing of the sort for Greek Comedy, the purpose of such a volume must be, in the first instance, to outline the foundations of the field with as much narrative and bibliographical detail as possible. We find ourselves, Janus-like, looking backward across our vast inheritance and forward to the edges of the modern reader's "horizon."

The most pleasant task, by far, was inviting the cast from the "A-List" for a grand sweep of the field. As for the style of the volume—the individual contributions quite naturally set a serious tone and high standard of scholarship. All along my comrades-in-comedy have been exceptionally cooperative, helpful and forgiving. I owe special thanks to Stanley Ireland for his efforts in coordinating between Warwick, Leeds and Chicago and to Douglas Olson and Mario Teló for their attention to the bibliography. I alone must take responsibility for flaws in the translation of Bernhard Zimmermann's chapter and for any infelicities in general.

Along the way, I have been assisted by many friends and colleagues: I would like to express heartfelt thanks to Tim Yetzina for his friendship, professionalism and tireless assistance. Peter Sibilio, Marjolein Oele, Becca Cain and Abigail Schmidt have also been most helpful. I am pleased to acknowledge Jasper Gaunt and Todd Lamkin of the Carlos Museum for supplying the image of our "Bird Man" on the cover with brief commentary. Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to the excellent staff at Brill—Michiel Klein Swormink, Caroline van Erp, and Margriet van der Wel—who have helped me navigate some treacherous waters. "Comedy," to quote W.C. Fields, "is a serious business."

Gregory W. Dobrov
Chicago, Jan. 1 2010

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVB	Beazley, J.D. 1956. *Attic Black-figure Vase-painters*. Oxford.
APF	Davies, J.K. 1971. *Athenian Propertied Families 600–300 BC*. Oxford.
ARV	Beazley, J.D. 1963. *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters*, 2nd ed. Oxford.
CAD	Csapo, E., and W.J. Slater. 1995. *The Context of Ancient Drama*. Ann Arbor.
CGFP	Austin C., ed. 1973. *Comicorum Graecorum fragmenta in papyris reperta*. Berlin.
CID	Lefèvre, F. 2002. *Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes*, vol. 4. Athens.
CVA	*Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*.
DFA	Pickard-Cambridge, A.W. 1968. *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*. Oxford.
DNP	Cancik, H., and H. Schneider, eds. 1996–2002. *Der neue Pauly*. Stuttgart and Weimar.
DTC	Pickard-Cambridge, A. 1962. *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*. Oxford.
FCG	Meineke, A., ed. 1839–1857. *Fragmenta comicorum Graecorum*. Berlin.
FD	Daux, G. 1943. *Chronologie delphique (Fouilles de Delphes*, vol. 3). Paris.
FGrHist	Jacoby, F. 1923. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Leiden.
FHG	Müller, K. and T. Müller, 1841–1870. *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum* Paris.
HGRT	Bieber, M. 1961. *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater*. Princeton.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graeci*, 14 vols. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin.
IGD	Trendall, A.D. and T.B.L. Webster. 1971. *Illustrations of Greek Drama*. London.
LCS	Trendall, A.D., 1967–1983. *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily*. Oxford and London.
MMC^{3}	Webster, T.B.L. 1978. *Monuments Illustrating Old and Middle Comedy*, 3rd ed. London.
MNC^{2}	Webster, T.B.L. 1995. *Monuments Illustrating New Comedy*, 2nd ed. *BICS* Supplement 50. London.
OCD	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 2003. 3rd ed. Revised.
P.Oxy.	*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.
PCG (K.-A.; Kassel-Austin)	Kassel, R., and C. Austin, eds. 1983–2001. *Poetae comici Graeci*. Berlin.
PHV	Trendall, A.D. 1967. *Phlyax Vases*. 2d ed. (*BICS* Supplement 19). London.

RE	Pauly, A., G. Wissowa et al., eds. 1894–1980. *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart.
RVAp	Trendall, A.D. and A. Cambitoglou. 1978–1992. *The Red-figured Vases of Apulia*, 2 vols. Oxford and London.
SEG	*Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden. 1923–
TAGS	Green, J.R. 1994. *Theatre in Ancient Greek Society*. London.
Thorikos	Mussche, H.F. et. al. 1984. *Thorikos*. Ghent.
TrGF	Snell, B., S.L. Radt and R. Kannicht. 1971–2004. *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 5 vols. Göttingen.
VS	Diels, H. and W. Kranz. 1951. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover Illustration "The startling image on one side of this pelike (a vessel for storing oil or wine) represents an actor wearing a bird costume: all-over tights and shorts, both patterned with dots and circles (reminiscent of representations of animal skins), and soft but high boots (*kothornoi*). The shorts are equipped with a tail and a phallus, two more of which are attached to the boots like spurs. The mask takes the form of a rooster's head with comb and wattle. The reverse shows a bearded man, wearing a flowing chiton and a fillet in his hair, who provides musical accompaniment with double flutes.
A variation on the same subject by the same painter, this time on a calyx-krater, depicts a flutist flanked by two birdmen, who are winged. Both, in predating the Aristophanic comedy by ten or twenty years, provide thrilling evidence for an otherwise thinly documented tradition of actors dressed as birds, from which Aristophanes drew inspiration."—Jasper Gaunt, Curator of Greek and Roman Art, Emory University.

Fig. 1 (p. 72) Small Athenian black-figure amphora. Brooklyn 09.35, said to be from Thebes. After Green (1985a).

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und die Erfindung von Atlantis (Leipzig, 2002), *Platon, Kritias: Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Göttingen, 2006). Numerous works co-authored and edited by Professor Nesselrath further augment his bibliography. His research projects include the publication of Hans Herter's unpublished work on Plato's Atlantis myth, a bilingual edition, with commentary, of church historian Socrates of Constantinople, a critical edition of the *Hymns* and *Satires* of Julian the Apostate, and a monograph on Herodotus.

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PART ONE

CONTEXTS

CHAPTER ONE

COMEDY AND HER CRITICS

Gregory W. Dobrov

Comedy endures as the most robust and adaptable genre to emerge from classical Athens.[1] From its inception through Roman adaptations and modern sitcoms, this Greek invention has enjoyed a vigorous reception down to the present day. In the landscape of modern scholarship, however, Greek comedy appears to be a late bloomer. Her leading representatives have only recently been receiving the full attention they merit. To the amusement of educated readers, for example, the mainstream media continue to note the de-bowdlerizing of Aristophanes in translation. We now have adequate commentaries for the major works of this playwright as well as an Oxford Classical text to replace the octogenarian Budé of Victor Coulon.[2] Arnott's Menander has set a new standard for the text and translation. The recent appearance of the final fascicule of the Groningen Aristophanes scholia marked the completion of a collaborative project launched nearly five decades earlier.[3] Kassel and Austin's *Poetae Comici Graeci* represents a comprehensive, state-of-the art edition of the fragments to replace all others, both distinguished (Kock) and dubious (Edmonds). S.D. Olson's *Broken Laughter* has made accessible to a broad audience the highlights of *Poetae Comici Graeci* (*PCG*) with supporting translations and commentary and is complemented handsomely by *The Birth of Comedy* (Rusten 2010). It is encouraging to finally have the raw material, as it were, refined, enriched, and updated. The purpose of the present volume is to set before the beginning and advancing student

[1] Important sources on the reception of comedy are Süss (1911), Boudreaux (1919), White (1912), Pfeiffer (1968; 1976), Murphy (1955–1956), Dover (1968a), Kennedy (1989), Dunbar (1995), N.G. Wilson (1983; 1992; 2007a), Nesselrath (1990), Reynolds & Wilson (1995), and Montana (1995).

[2] Coulon (1923–1930), to say nothing of the century-old OCT of Hall and Geldart (1900–1901). A student-friendly asset is the companion volume to the OCT, *Aristophanea: Studies on the Text of Aristophanes* (N.G. Wilson 2008). All students of comedy are deeply indebted to Alan Sommerstein's editions (1980–2002). These commentaries and translations have sustained scholars for three decades. The accompanying index will remain uniquely valuable for many years to come.

[3] Regtuit (2007).

of Greek comedy the main elements of the field in a clear and accessible format articulated into three sections: "Contexts," "History," and "Elements."

The recent surge in scholarly productivity constitutes a Renaissance in Greek comic studies. In the first rank, one might mention Nesselrath on Middle Comedy, Zimmermann on meter, Arnott's Alexis, Storey's Eupolis, Willi on comic language, and a host of specialized monographs on topics ranging from text to theatricality. New work and fresh perspectives are reinvigorating a field that in the past has trailed behind others in vitality and scope. This disparity most certainly has to do with the difficulty of the texts themselves. Greek Comedy presents a formidable array of linguistic and cultural challenges that render it less "user friendly" than other literary genres. A reader lacking specialized knowledge will need guidance in navigating the concentrated and heterogeneous presentation of the modern scholarly sources. Our collective task in this volume, therefore, is to provide assistance, indeed a stimulus, for the serious student in exploring the Greek comic corpus.

In the period between the publication of the Budé Aristophanes and new Oxford Text, many strains of critical fashion have come and gone without contributing much to the exegesis of comedy. For our purposes, the most significant critical development of the last two generations is grounded in a fundamental shift of perspective on the nature of the play text itself. Comic scripts are now commonly approached as components of a "live" performance fixed in place and time. The language of comedy is charged with a topical and colloquial energy determined by many concentric contexts of the dramatic competition: political, social, and historical. Performance criticism keyed to social history and archaeology has advanced our understanding of comedy beyond the *Textphilologie* of the nineteenth century. Thoughtful reassessments of literary criticism[4] prompt an important question about the purpose of an introductory volume such as the present *Companion*: What approach is called for at this moment in classical scholarship, specifically the study of Athenian comedy? The essays in this volume—the first of its kind—show that the

[4] Reckford (2002, 643), with some justification, admires "old-fashioned readings of comedy [that] … are still more vigorous and potent than the theoretical curlicues of the younger de-generation." See, for example, Eagleton (2003). A general limitation of more recent critical approaches has been preoccupation with theory and critical authority at the expense of the primary texts. It would be difficult, for example, to show what the vast enterprise of psychoanalytical criticism from Lacan to Žižek has contributed to the understanding of Greek comedy. For thematically oriented essays on comedy (gender, humor theory etc.) see Revermann (forthcoming).

answer has to do with philology, literary history, and performance in the broadest sense of these familiar terms. The charge implicit in our collective project suggests the modest roles of guide and interpreter. Our efforts are directed toward producing a useful resource for navigating the fundamentals of the genre: authors, texts, language, production, dramatic technique, and sociohistorical context. The impulse to pursue original or theoretical lines of inquiry has been subordinated to this, more immediate, responsibility. At the outset, then, it is appropriate to establish a context for our efforts, to survey the principal figures and themes of comic criticism, and to set the stage for the chapters that follow.

1. *Criticism before Philology: Comic Poets on Comedy*

Criticism implies an act of separation in which a hierarchy of worth comes into play. Concerning the notion of κρίσις, Gregory Nagy notes that

> the sense of "separating," "discriminating," "judging" those works and those authors that are to be preserved and those that are not, is crucial to the concept of the "canon" in the Classical world. The Alexandrian scholars who were in charge of this process of separation, discrimination, judgment, were the *kritikoi*, "critics," while the Classical authors who were meant to survive the *krisis* were called the *enkrithentes* … the *krisis* of the *enkrithentes* starts not with the Alexandrian scholars, nor even with the likes of Aristotle: the "crisis" of this *krisis* is already under way in the Archaic and Classical periods of Greece, where songs and poetry were traditionally performed in a context of competition.[5]

For a comic poet, then, the judgment of merit was determined in an agonistic process institutionalized at the dramatic festivals. From the outset comedy exhibited a keen talent for holding a carnival mirror to itself in which the poets, their craft and community were vividly reflected.[6] Constituent elements such as the agon and parabasis are charged with the energies of criticism and self-presentation. The lively commentary written into plays such as *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Clouds* is both explicit and authoritative. The most interesting material is concentrated in the early parabases of Aristophanes, for which there is now a substantial bibliography.[7]

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[5] Nagy in Kennedy (1989, 68).

[6] The "democratic" nature of the theatrical moment has been exaggerated. See Kaimio (1999).

[7] Sifakis (1971a), Hubbard (1991), Sidwell (1995), and Sidwell (2009).

There is clear evidence for sophisticated comic invention before and beyond Aristophanes. A play such as Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros*, for example, blends myth, politics, and role playing in a complex and original manner worthy of the better-known poet.[8] Similarly, we glean enough information from the comic fragments and *testimonia* to lament not having a full script of a play by Pherecrates or Eupolis. The theoretical limits of interplay among comic poets are outlined by Storey (2003), who asserts, sensibly, that the "literary criticism" of the comic poets was necessarily straightforward and accessible.[9] Nevertheless, an important intellectual dimension of comedy was its response to its cultural environment, contemporary drama in particular. Aristophanes' creative engagement with tragedy has received considerable attention in recent years;[10] plays such as *Acharnians* and *Peace* are bound up with Euripidean models in a way that is simultaneously mimetic and critical. The comparison of tragedy and comedy in a famous fragment from the *Poiesis* of Antiphanes (fr. 189 Kassel-Austin) is a favorite example.[11] The poet of Middle Comedy sharply contrasts the poetics of plot construction that is characteristic of the two theatrical genres, disingenuously envying the "blessedly" easy work of composing tragedy. The humor of this fragment appears to be an inversion of the light-hearted end of Plato's *Symposium*, in which Socrates argues that one and the same poet could, in theory, work in both genres. At the very least, we detect here the echoes of a lively literary-critical discussion toward the end of Aristophanes' career.

Already in his earliest work, Aristophanes exhibits a critical tendency that presupposes an educated spectator. In a fragment of *Banqueters*, for example (fr. 233 Kassel-Austin), we get a glimpse of a humorous clash between traditional learning and tricky legal terminology. Similar contests are incorporated into quite a few subsequent plays such as *Clouds* and *Wasps*. The parabases of the 420s as well as *Frogs*—that most literary of comedies—bristle with critical implications for the poet's role in the polis as he tackles problems such as demagoguery and aspects of what we might call "culture wars."[12] In scenes such as *Acharnians* 377–384, the

[8] PCG IV, 140–141. See also Dobrov (2007, 256–257) and Bakola (2005).

[9] Storey (2003, 297–303) notes that the critical rivalry among poets was "competitive, yes, and even combative, but there is no need to see borrowing or imitation as essentially satirical and hostile."

[10] Dobrov (2001).

[11] N.W. Slater (1995, 37–39).

[12] Dobrov (2001, 156). In his first extant play (*Acharnians*, 425 BCE), Aristophanes explores the power of persuasion in a study of genre and role playing. Dicaeopolis, the

homology between the theater and pnyx (or law court) is extended to suggest a comparison between the discourse of comedy and other modes of persuasion. A decade before Aristophanes began to compete, we have evidence of the so-called Decree of Morychides (440/439–437/436) banning lampoons of some sort. By 427 Cleon had responded to Aristophanic satire with legal action of some sort. In turn, Aristophanes-Dicaeoplolis prepares to defend himself, employing the full resources of the stage:

αὐτὸς τ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ὑπὸ Κλέωνος ἄπαθον 377
ἐπίσταμαι διὰ τὴν πέρυσι κωμῳδίαν.
εἰσελκύσας γάρ μ᾽ εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον
διέβαλλε καὶ ψευδῆ κατεγλώττιζέ μου …
νῦν οὖν με πρῶτον πρὶν λέγειν ἐάσατε 383
ἐνσκευάσασθαί μ᾽ οἷον ἀθλιώτατον.

And I know about myself, what I suffered
at Cleon's hands because of last year's comedy.
He dragged me into the council chamber and
began slandering me, tell glib-mouthed lies about me …
So now, first of all, before I speak, please let me dress
myself up as piteously as I can.

Throughout the parabases Aristophanes advertises his service to the polis as an effective "teacher" and "advisor." This claim is reinforced by boasts in passages such as *Knights* 507–545 and *Peace* 734–752, where he announces himself "best of all comic poets." Socrates, Cleon, and other κωμῳδούμενοι felt the sting of comedy, and there is evidence that on occasion they fought back, personally or by means of censorship.[13] A pervasive theme of the parabasis is that Aristophanes is the best practitioner of his craft and that comic speech has the power to effect change—indeed, to influence the demos.[14] Exploiting the double sense of διδάσκαλος

lead character, assumes a tragic role and acquires the original costume in order to address the audience directly (vv. 377–384). The opening of his speech at *Acharnians* 496–556 sounds very much like a direct appeal to the demos by the comic poet.

[13] Aristophanes mentions the risks of writing comedy at *Wasps* 1021. For the legal and personal risks that a poet faced, see the section on "poetic daring" in Hubbard (1991, 61–63) and Sommerstein (1996). For criticism implicit in classical texts, see Too (1999) and Ford (2004). The dramatized conflict between Aristophanes and Cleon is a prominent feature of the poet's early work down to *Peace* of 421 and illustrates comedy's potential as a forum for political criticism and influencing the demos. Cleon figures prominently in Aristophanes' *Knights* and in the parabases of the 420s, e.g., *Clouds* 549–552, *Wasps* 1030–1042, and *Peace* 752–760. For a plausible example of censorship, see Hubbard (1991, 159–160).

[14] For a review of this issue with a useful bibliography, see Heath (1997) and Sidwell (1995; 2009).

(producer, teacher, e.g., *Acharnians* 628–668), Aristophanes established comedy as an engagé discourse with a carnivalesque freedom of speech to criticize malefactors and persuade the demos. Modern commentators on this point (Storey and Olson in this volume) cite the Old Oligarch and anonymous later critics (e.g., Koster Prolegomenon III) to underscore the sociopolitical function of comedy: to criticize individuals, attack collective enemies and prominent κωμῳδούμενοι, and perhaps even sway the demos. But it is Aristophanes himself who makes the strongest case by implying that he can affect the behavior of the demos through censure—at the very least, *castigare ridendo mores*—and, by offering advice on specifics of behavior, even policy (e.g., *Frogs* 686–705, 718–737).

Already in fifth-century scripts, then, we find the beginnings of a critical approach to comedy. The parabases and other self-reflexive passages look forward to much subsequent commentary on plot, character, politics, social satire, and genre. The language of the parabasis can borrow from the sophist's lexicon and exhibits a rich vocabulary for everything from the poet, critic, and actor to the audience itself (e.g., *Wasps* 1042–1050). The parabases of *Knights* and *Clouds*, moreover, are critical of Aristophanes' rivals such as Crates, Magnes, Cratinus, and Eupolis. We find here disavowal of comic clichés such as pandering to the audience, the "hungry Heracles" gag, and various other lowbrow tricks (*Frogs* 1–7). Aristophanes comments on many aspects of his craft from stage business (the stage-crane at *Peace* 174–175) to figures of speech (the analysis of comic allegory at *Peace* 43–48). In a concrete sense, the first surviving plays mark the beginning of a critical tradition that concerned itself with various aspects of comic technique as well as with the role of comedy and the poet in society. The main domains of comedy—the technical, aesthetic, ethical, and sociopolitical—are clearly identified and studied in the work of Aristophanes and his rivals.[15] Dovetailing with the reflexive criticism of the comic playwrights themselves is the testimony of their contemporaries—spectator-critics who responded to the theater as a living and evolving institution. Despite its limited and oblique nature, the testimony of Plato and Aristotle is of primary importance, especially in its ethical and teleological aspects.

[15] S.D. Olson (2007, 151–186) collects fragments illustrating "The Reception of Other Poetry." See also O'Sullivan (2006).

2. *Plato*

A remarkable feature of Greek philosophy and cultural theory is the universal compulsion to assess the ethical and sociopolitical value of laughter.[16] As we have seen, the comic poets explicitly seek to elicit laughter despite Aristophanes' famous disavowal of rivals who angle for easy results (*Clouds* 537–548). Plato, in contrast, is wary of poetry in that it privileges performance and inspiration over communication and understanding; the pursuit of mimesis as an end it itself—to say nothing of aiming to amuse—meets with his disapproval. His low estimation of poets as teachers is well known, as is the equation of poetic inspiration with madness (*Laws* 719c–d). Comedy is especially problematic in light of the philosopher's judgment that laughter, as irrational, is inappropriate for guardians of the ideal state (*Republic* 388e–389b). Aristophanes' insistence that he is a worthy "teacher" of the demos is answered, as it were, by a sustained critique in *Ion*, *Protagoras*, and the *Republic*. The summary of Plato's views on poetry in Book II of *Laws* suggests that poets and their craft, being mimetic, should be assigned a subordinate position as teachers and authorities. Although comedy is unfavorably contrasted with tragedy in this respect,[17] poets are nevertheless regarded as respectable craftsmen. The "roles" of Agathon and Aristophanes in the *Symposium* suggest that playwrights were significant enough to be included in the conversation.

The allusion to *Clouds* in the Apology (19c) supports the view that the comic agon had an impact on public opinion beyond the Theater of Dionysus. Socrates' complaint there underscores the tension between a comic poet's general appeal to the demos and pointed ridicule of the individual κωμῳδούμενος. If we juxtapose Aristophanes' lurid attacks on individuals such as Cleon with his distortion of Socrates in *Clouds*, it becomes evident that the spectator was expected to understand the poetics and limits of comic discourse.[18] Moreover, Plato's masterful imitation of Aristophanic method in the famous speech at *Symposium* 189c2–d6 reveals a degree of respect and appreciation that tempers his denunciation of mimesis and comic ridicule elsewhere. In a sense, Plato's contempt for the sophist's literary-critical skills (*Protagoras* 339 b–d) finds a

[16] Halliwell (2008, 264 ff.).

[17] E.g., *Philebus* 48–50, *Republic* 388e (laughter to be avoided by Guardians).

[18] See Dover (1967) and Guthrie (1971) for influential discussions of Socrates κωμῳδούμενος.

response in his own narrative and mimetic display. Similarly, Aristotle's juxtaposition of Socratic Logoi and the mimes of Xenarchus and Sophron at *Poetics* 1447b11 is striking in its foreshortening of the moral and artistic distance between the playwrights and Plato as poet (composer).

Nevertheless, the kinship of ridicule with vice makes its first appearance in Plato's *Philebus* (48–50): mockery is directed at an unthreatening εἴρων who lacks awareness about himself physically, intellectually, and socially. Derisive laughter at an inferior character, it is argued, engages a mixture of amusement and pain—a symptom of vice—while self-ignorance on the part of a superior figure may be intimidating. The strong link established here between comic pleasure and malice (φθόνος) has been especially influential in tainting comedy with a certain moral stigma that serves as the starting point for Aristotelian criticism. In well-known passages—*Poetics* 1449a, *Rhetoric* II.12 (wit as educated insolence), and the critique of humor in *Nichomachean Ethics* IV.8 (joking as a kind of abuse)—Aristotle articulates a more temperate position that does not preclude appreciation of comic drama. The Superiority Theory of Humor, as it has come to be known, abides as an ethical critique of comic pleasure as deriving from a "sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly," in Thomas Hobbes' famous formulation.[19] In the evolution of the modern field of humor studies, the theory of "superiority" remains the first of several classical approaches alongside Incongruity Theory (Kant, Schopenhauer, Bergson), Relief Theory (Spencer, Freud), and theories of play (Eastman, Huizinga).[20]

Philebus is unique in the Platonic corpus for its sustained discussion of comedy and comic character. The εἴρων is productively contrasted across genres with the result that audience response to comic characters appears morally inferior to the same in tragedy. We shall interrogate Plato in vain, however, for commentary on technical or aesthetic aspects of comedy. The spotlight is on character, mimesis, and the ethics of laughter and ridicule. To be fair, the philosopher is willing to justify laughter in certain cases, specifically when it serves as a means of understanding and as a weapon directed against folly and vice. We can catch at this point the

[19] Morreal (1987, 10–20) and Hubbard (1991, 1–15).

[20] Halliwell (2008, 264–331) explores the role of humor in Greek intellectual culture. As we see from Plato and the Peripatetics, ancient thinkers were expected to have an opinion about the social and cultural value of laughter.

thread of ideas that are developed in later traditions such as the notion of the seriocomic (σπουδαιογέλοιον) as well as the distinction between good-natured and ill-natured joking.

Plato takes the content of comedy seriously and would subject the influence of poets to critical scrutiny and control. It is worth pointing out that artists and intellectuals—Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle—who drew on personal experience of the theater were concerned with comedy in a way that is profoundly different from the philological approach developed in Alexandria. Into the third century, critics are no longer responding to a living practice, but rather recovering a lost reality. The fundamentals of performance that had to be reconstructed in a later age needed no comment in Aristotle's day. Despite the limited scope of Plato's commentary on the theater, then, we should remember that his is one of the few critical voices reflecting firsthand concerns of a citizen-spectator. After the classical period, comedy does not figure prominently in philosophically inflected cultural criticism.[21]

3. *Peripatetic Criticism*

The fountainhead of formal dramatic criticism is Aristotle's *Poetics*,[22] a work significantly informed by firsthand experience of Athenian drama. We can glean little for our purposes from the extant first book, where comedy serves largely as a foil for tragedy. There is no doubt, however, that the main principles set forth by Aristotle in *Poetics* would apply in large measure to both genres and were, in fact, to be invoked in modern criticism of comedy: his theory of poetic mimesis along with central notions such as probability, necessity, the "three unities," irrelevance of authorial intention, and an evolutionary teleology in literary history. The teleological theme is especially evident in later writers such as Platonius and the anonymous essays *On Comedy*, which drew on Peripatetic elements in the commentary of Alexandrian scholars.[23]

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[21] For example, Pergamene allegorism that intersected with Neoplatonic and Alexandrian Christian exegesis.

[22] See also the important passage at *Nichomachean Ethics* (1128a22–25). Influential modern discussions of Aristotle and comedy include Cooper (1912), E. Olson (1968), Janko (1984), Russell (1981), Halliwell in Kennedy (1989, 179–183), and Sutton (1994).

[23] See Rusten (2010) on contemporary historians (Philochorus, Theopompus), the Peripatetic biographers, and Plutarch.

The evidence for a second book of *Poetics* devoted to comedy is controversial. Since the publication in 1839 of the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, there have been intermittent efforts to locate the theoretical sketch more precisely in the peripatetic tradition.[24] Janko (1984) is the most ambitious in reconstructing *Poetics* II directly from the *Tractatus* as "closer to Aristotle than is usually thought."[25] More plausible is the view of Nesselrath (1990a) that the summary reflects the work of a later scholar of the Peripatos, perhaps Theophrastus.[26] In setting forth the general lines of Aristotelian thought, it is best to rely on authentic sources in the first instance, using the theoretical implications of the *Tractatus* with caution. We may be confident, however, that Aristotelian dramatic theory is always underwritten by spectatorial competence and research. Drawing on official archives, the philosopher compiled a complete "Production Record" (Διδασκαλίαι) of contests in dithyramb, tragedy, and comedy, detailing prize winners, dates, and other essential information. This document was of great value to Alexandrian scholarship on comedy, specifically the first critical edition of Aristophanes made by his namesake, Aristophanes of Byzantium, as well as for Callimachus' chronological catalogue of dramatic poets. Aristotle's pupil Dicaearchus of Messene is said to have written synopses of tragic plots (Sext. Emp. *Adv. Math*. 3.3). It is tempting—though by no means certain (Rusten 1982)—to see at this early point in Peripatetic tradition the genesis of plot summaries or "hypotheses" later anthologized and commonly attached to literary scrolls in Alexandria. The value of summation and analysis in the best hypotheses is evident from even a cursory review of the *testimonia* in Kassel-Austin. In some instances, such as the well-known *Dionysalexandros* of Cratinus, virtually all of our (considerable) information about the play is furnished by the hypothesis. To Dicaearchus is also attributed a work "Concerning Dionysiac Competitions," in which the author most likely dealt with chronology and history.

When progressing from Plato's *Philebus* to the *Poetics* of Aristotle, we should be mindful of a shift in the meaning of "comedy" between the final decades of the fifth century—Plato's formative years—and Aristotle's maturity in the third quarter of the fourth. Aristotle's views of character, structure, and invective reflect the emerging New Comedy and exhibit

[24] Koster (1975, 63–67). See Janko (1984) for the text of the (tenth-century) *Tractatus* with translation and commentary. See also Russell (1981, 204–206) and Cooper (1922).

[25] Janko (1984, 4).

[26] Nesselrath (1990a, 102–149).

little explicit concern with the type of drama composed by Cratinus or Aristophanes. This circumstance may account, in part, for his subtler and more tolerant approach to the genre. Nevertheless, Aristotle does draw a pointed parallel that appears to hint at the fifth century: comedy's lineage ascends to abuse poetry in the iambic tradition just as tragedy is heir to Homeric epic (*Poetics* 1449a4–5).[27] Here Aristotle revises the *Philebus* in his general formulation that comic mimesis represents inferior individuals and base behavior; its aim is not *ad hominem* abuse but harmless laughter (*Poetics* 1448b26–27, 1449a32–37). In chapter 5 of *Poetics*, Aristotle limits the "base" nature of comic characters to exclude "absolute evil" in a way that would entail "pain and ruin." The latter are the domain of tragedy, while the "ugly" (αἰσχρόν) mask of comedy points to a range of "inadequacies" (ἁμαρτήματα)—physical, social, material, and moral—that are, nevertheless, compatible with ridicule. We notice, therefore, that the domain of comedy, if described by "the unseemly or ugly" (τὸ αἰσχρόν), may extend beyond the ethical in the strict sense. Various failings, including physical flaws, may serve as targets of ridicule. The precise line between vicious and harmless laughter is not carefully drawn. Similarly, there is little clarity on the issue of how or when comedy is to distinguish between involuntary ἁμαρτήματα and those for which the characters are directly responsible—in terms of *Poetics* 5—between the iambic (mimesis *ad hominem*) and τὸ γελοῖον appropriate to comedy.

Aristotle's careful attention to the facts of production (Διδασκαλίαι) no doubt informed his teleological view of literary history.[28] In the case of comedy, this means, in the first instance, progress from the iambos to a comedy of manners: "Of Athenian poets Crates was the first to drop the comedy of invective and frame stories and plots of a general nature" (*Poetics* 1449b5–9). We find here also the tantalizing suggestion of direct influence on the part Sicilian playwrights Phormus and Epicharmus on Crates. In later Peripatetic criticism, the notion of evolution was extended and yielded the tripartite model of Old, Middle, and New periods.[29] Aristotle suggests that the properly comic (as opposed to the iambic) must have generalized or universal implications. The action and language of the genre will be governed by the principle of "the probable" (τὸ

[27] For the connections between Comedy and iambic abuse poetry, see Rosen (1988), with the skeptical response of E.L. Bowie (2002).

[28] On the relationship between Aristotelian *Didaskaliae* and the epigraphic evidence (didaskaliae and victor lists), see Rusten (2010).

[29] Nesselrath (1990a, 145–149).

εἰκός)—an important concept in Aristotle's discussion of plot, character, and diction as informed by fourth-century comedy.[30] We do not find here, however, explicit commentary on plot or dramatic structure.

Cooper (1922) attributes to Aristotle the implications of the *Tractatus* concerning the constituents of comedy—plot, ethos, thought, diction, music, spectacle—as well its formal parts: prologue, choral song, episode, and exode. This line of argument is ultimately unconvincing since the *Tractatus* mechanically replicates *Poetics* on tragedy and offers little insight into the reality of the comic composition or performance. We are safe in assuming that plot would be regarded as the heart of a play, that the action and characters would be governed by notions of realism, and that the plot would end in benign action. This latter distinction between genres is found at *Poetics* 1453a38–39 noted above: comedy, unlike tragedy, has an ending entailing no pain, ruin, or death. The proper pleasure of comedy, then, will have to do with a conclusion that defuses a potentially grave situation.

Inquiring further into the psychological effect of comedy, we face the challenge of the *Tractatus* where the genre is defined in terms of catharsis:

> Comedy is a representation of an action that is laughable and lacking in magnitude … accomplishing by means of pleasure and laughter the catharsis of such emotions. It has laughter as its mother. (§ 3)

This passage suggests that the Relief Theory—inevitably associated with the names of Spencer and Freud—might be rooted in a Peripatetic notion of catharsis.[31] Unfortunately this cryptic imitation of the famous tragic formula has not produced a generally accepted theory of comic catharsis.[32] We must be satisfied to imagine that Aristotle had articulated the affective aspect of comedy somehow within the limits of a moderate take on human shortcomings.

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[30] Concerning Aristotle's notion of "the probable," Webster (1970, 114–116) notes that "it means that the incidents of the plot arise out of one another in a probable sequence. In this sense 'probable' refers to the technique of plot-construction, to the unity of action and the preparation and motivation of exits and entrances. Secondly 'probable' is interpreted as 'the sort of things which would happen' or, as we might say, 'the sort of things which do happen every day …' The realities of time and place are also carefully observed; Thirdly 'probable' can be used in the sense of 'suitable to the character in this particular situation.'"

[31] See Sutton (1994) for a review of the issue.

[32] E. Olson (1968, 45) poses the obvious question, "Why anyone should want to get rid of pleasure or be pleased by getting rid of pleasure and still have it, [the author of the *Tractatus*] fails to say."

As we learn from Storey's account of origins in this volume, a suggestive comment at *Poetics* 1449a9 identifies the beginnings of drama as "improvisational"—γενομένη δ' οὖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτοσχεδιαστικῆς—perhaps with implications connecting comic action with a social (ritual) context anticipating the double sense of (χορο-) διδάσκαλος (playwright, teacher). The notion of a teleological, organic development in the evolution of dramatic genres (1449a14–15) has been enormously influential in later thinking about the connection between comedy and polis, a point explored at greater length by Olson and Storey below.[33] Aristotle does not directly respond to the theme of the poet as "teacher" of the demos, however. He is generally committed to a view of drama as edifying and grounded in virtue, but, apart from a passing link between comedy and democracy at *Poetics* 1448a31–32, he does not seem interested in articulating a larger social or political function for the genre. It is possible to see general social commentary in the *Characters* of Aristotle's successor, Theophrastus. Menander, who is said to have studied with him, may have been the first comic poet to intersect productively with Peripatetic thought. At the very least, Menandrean titles such as *Dyskolos*, *Georgos*, *Kolax*, and many others are redolent of the Theophrastean roster of types. Throughout antiquity various critical strands intertwine without our being able to specify the exact source. Thus many undateable *testimonia* like the *Tractatus*, Platonius, and the anonymous Byzantine essays reflect the influence of Aristotle and the formalism of Alexandrian philology that followed.

4. *Alexandrian Criticism*

The establishment of the Hellenistic monarchies had the effect of concentrating intellectual activity in centers of power where the system of patronage reemerged to shape the course of literary history.[34] The new poetics of Alexandrianism and the sciences of textual criticism and exegesis were hallmarks of the era. The reception of Greek comedy underwent a profound transformation. The stream divided: in Italy we observe a pragmatic appropriation, a living reformatting of New Comedy for performance—first exemplified by fourth-century re-performances of

[33] Chapters 2 and 6, respectively.
[34] Kennedy (1989, 200). See also Reynolds and N.G. Wilson (1991, 5–17).

Old Comedy in the south[35] and, later, adaptations of New Comedy by Livius Andronicus, Plautus, and Terence. At Alexandria, formation of the literary canon and the emergence of systematic scholarship participate in a new appropriation of Hellenism. The new intellectual enterprise of Zenodotus and his successors was intent not only on "establishing the authenticity of individual texts but also … asserting the priority and privilege of the Hellenic culture which produced them."[36] The Golden Age of the third and second centuries BCE saw scholars from all over the Mediterranean rally at the library attached to the museum. The lion's share of their industry was given to Homer and Athenian drama.[37] In the case of comedy, there was no "official text" of the sort established by Lycurgus of Athens for the main tragedians in the 330s[38] (acquired by Ptolemy II Philadelphus some fifty years later). Nevertheless, copies of plays by the main comic poets continued to be copied and circulated well into the imperial period. In the acquisition of classical texts—and in this connection, comedy was a top priority—Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III Euergetes were known to employ questionable means.[39] The intellectual work of the Alexandrian scholars reveals several distinct directions:

1. Establishment of the "canon." The initial classification of comic poets and texts begun by Zenodotus' contemporary Lycophron of Chalcis (born ca. 320) was followed by Callimachus' "Critical Inventory (πίναξ καὶ ἀναγραφή) of Dramatic Poets from the Beginning, in Chronological Order" in twelve books. The Aristophanic catalogue alone comprised forty-four titles (of which four were deemed spurious).
2. Textual criticism. The collection, classification, and collation of manuscripts aimed at producing the most authoritative edition of a given text. The principal figure in this project was Aristophanes of Byzantium, third to hold the position of head of the Alexandrian Library.[40]

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[35] See Taplin (1993) on the evidence for Aristophanes in Magna Graecia.

[36] Too (1999, 135). In her fourth chapter, Too discusses the formation of the canon under Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus.

[37] Useful accounts of Alexandrian scholarship on comedy are found in White (1914), Pfeiffer (1968), Kennedy (1989), Dunbar (1995), and Dickey (2007).

[38] Plutarch *Moralia* 841 ff.

[39] Galen On Hippokrates' *Epidemics* 2.4.

[40] Boudreaux (1919, 25–27) and Pfeiffer (1968, 189–196).

3. Exegesis. The elucidation of difficult passages and vocabulary culminated in the invention and practice of the running commentary or ὑπόμνημα. There is evidence for a commentary on Aristophanes' *Wealth* (perhaps also *Birds* and *Wasps*) by Euphronius, the teacher of Aristophanes of Byzantium. Although the evidence for early commentary on Aristophanes links Euphronius' name with that of Callistratus, pride of place here belongs to Aristarchus, "ὁ γραμματικώτατος," who is said to have composed a prodigious number of commentaries in over eight hundred "books."

There is evidence of works by the main scholars of the library devoted specifically to comedy: in addition to the work of classification noted above, Lycophron composed a treatise *On Comedy* that appears to have concentrated narrowly on vocabulary.[41] As a direct extension of Aristotle's Διδασκαλίαι, Callimachus's "Critical Inventory (Pinakes)" consisting of some 120 books was an authoritative, if sometimes inaccurate, catalogue of which a significant proportion was devoted to drama. Callimachus also laid groundwork for commentaries in his research on special topics keyed to literary projects.[42] The scholar-poet Eratosthenes of Cyrene (ca. 285–195), who succeeded Apollonius as head of the library, composed a work entitled Περὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμῳδίας in at least twelve books.[43] Allusions to this work in the scholia suggest that its scope was broad, ranging across various topics including the genuineness of certain plays, vocabulary, circumstances of production, textual problems, chronology, and general problems of interpretation.[44] According to the *Suda*, the lesser-known member of the tragic Pleiad Dionysiades of Mallos composed a treatise entitled Χαρακτῆρες ἢ Φιλοκώμῳδοι in the reign of Ptolemy II. "[This work was] probably the first attempt," notes Dunbar (1995, 34), "to distinguish the styles of the Attic comic poets"—a topic that echoes throughout the fragments of scholarship surviving from late antiquity and the Middle Ages.[45] Aristophanes of Byzantium

[41] Pfeiffer (1968, 105–107, 119–120). One of the "Pleiad" of scholar-poets, Lycophron, appears to have produced an edition of comedy for Ptolemy II and composed a hybrid of Satyr drama and philosophy entitled *Menedemos* (Tzetzes in *Prolegomena de Comoedia* [Koster XIa] 22).

[42] Dunbar (1995, 33).

[43] Boudreaux (1919, 52–74) and Pfeiffer (1968, 159–162).

[44] Dunbar (1995, 33).

[45] Pfeiffer (1968, 160) sees the influence of this lost treatise on the similarly titled, and much later, treatise of Platonios Περὶ διαφορᾶς χαρακτήρων.

was quite active in the field of comedy: along with many other poetic texts, he edited perhaps all the extant plays of his namesake and published a synopsis of Athenian hetairai (no doubt drawn from comedy) and *dramatis personae*. We do not have evidence of a running commentary on comedy by Aristophanes of Byzantium, but he may be responsible for confirming the tripartition of the genre into "Old," "Middle," and "New" periods.[46] It is also likely that he divided comic lyrics into cola, as he did for Pindar, thereby rescuing them from being further transmitted as prose.[47] It is attractive to see here the beginnings of a discipline that can be traced through the work of Heliodorus to the modern authorities such as John White and Bernhard Zimmermann. The last great Alexandrian scholar, Aristarchus of Samothrace, wrote continuous commentaries on a number of comedies, as noted above, including eight of Aristophanes. Dunbar (1995) assesses his work as narrowly philological and "indifferent to history."[48] At this point the Alexandrian library intersects with its rival at Pergamum in the work of Crates of Mallos, whose lexical work and commentary on Aristophanes are occasionally cited in the scholia and Athenaeus. Pupils of both Aristarchus and Crates, Ammonius and Herodicus, respectively, compiled rather modern-sounding works on the sociology of Old Comedy.[49]

Alexandrian philology in all these aspects developed methods of criticism and exegesis based on the rather broad principle of "analogy." Although grammar was the primary field in which this principle originated, analogy was applied broadly to all aspects of language, history, and material culture. Aristophanes of Byzantium deployed a system of marginal signs as a sort of critical shorthand to indicate dubious (corrupt, misplaced) lines and doublets. He may also have been the first to apply the diacritical signs (breathings, accents) in a systematic manner. Aristarchus laid the groundwork for the great philological industry of the nineteenth century in his demonstration of the principle that an author is his own best interpreter within the strictures of a precise "science" of grammar. Careful attention to usage and parallel passages informs

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[46] See Nesselrath (1990a, 186). Athenaeus (664A) notes that the comic poet Machon of Sicyon or Corinth who put on plays at Alexandria taught Aristophanes of Byzantium "concerning the parts of comedies" (Athenaeus 241F).

[47] Dunbar (1995, 34).

[48] See Dunbar (1995, 37).

[49] A prosopography of κωμῳδούμενοι: Σ Wasps 1239; Athenaios 586A, 591C. Dover (1968a, n. 52) notes that a second-century letter (*P. Oxy*. 2192) mentions "books vi and vii of Hypsicrates' Κωμῳδούμενοι." See also Sommerstein (1996).

much of what can be gleaned of his exegetical method. Although textual criticism is naturally preoccupied with microstructure (individual morphemes, words, lines), Aristarchus was clearly mindful of the work as a whole, even in the case of a great and sprawling epic such as the *Iliad*. "To a greater extent than many ancient critics," notes Kennedy,[50] "he kept in mind the composition of the poem as a whole, emphasized the relationship of speech to character, explained the function of metaphors and similes … and sometimes criticized passages as inappropriate or overwritten."

At the same time, the comic landscape was narrowing as Aristophanes assumes the leading position in the comic canon. As Sommerstein notes below, the introduction of the codex was a major "bottleneck" that ancient literature had to negotiate. In the scholarly reception, Aristophanes overshadowed his rivals and, eventually, later poets as well by virtue of being regarded a treasure trove of authentic fifth-century Attic Greek. It is a somewhat overstated commonplace that Menander and the poets of Middle Comedy had no mediaeval reception—a circumstance that has much to do with their Greek being judged as less "pure" and closer to the Koine.[51] In fact, Menander survived the first "bottleneck" in the early Byzantine period quite well, and there is evidence—albeit slim—of a manuscript tradition later into the mediaeval period.[52] Subsequent debates about standards of linguistic purity explored in this volume by Willi reveal a trend that is symptomatic of the scholarly reception of comedy: the scripts of Aristophanes, in particular, come to be treasured as cultural documents and a record of "pure" Attic but are no longer available for appreciation as live theater.[53]

It is important, however, to keep in mind how little survives of the scholarly Golden Age as a corrective to the tendency of modern critics (e.g., F.A. Wolf) to emphasize the defects of the Alexandrian commentators rather than their merits. The influence of the library informs scholarship on comedy through the Middle Ages to the present. Horace famously praised the moral power of comic ridicule meted out by the

[50] Kennedy (1989, 208) and Pfeiffer (1968, 226). See also Muzzolon (2005).

[51] See Sommerstein below on the nadir of learning in eighth-century Byzantium.

[52] N.J. Lowe (2007, v) notes that identification of Menander's *Titthe* in the Vatican palimpsest is "testimony to the fundamental falseness of a truth peddled to students over a century, that there was no medieval tradition of Menander."

[53] It is no coincidence that one of the more useful Koster *Prolegomena* is a scholion on Hellenistic grammarian Dionysius Thrax (170–190 BCE).

canonical triad established in Alexandria, "*Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae … siquis erat dignus describi … multa cum libertate notabant*" (*Satires* 1.4.1–5). This notion becomes a topos echoed from Persius through Macrobius into the Byzantine period.[54] Quintillian (10.1.65) praises Greek Comedy noting that it is "almost the only form of poetry to preserve the true grace of Attic speech":

> It also possesses a most eloquent freedom in attacking vice for which it is especially famous. However, it has a great deal of power in other areas; it is eloquent, grand and delightful …. I doubt if any other literature is more akin to oratory or more suitable for training orators.

Even his scorn for Roman comedy is explained by his despair that Latin, by nature, could ever match the charm of Menander's Greek—a linguistic judgment that explicitly corresponds to the Atticist's preference for Aristophanes. If we allow that theatrical reception is an implicit form of criticism, then the transmission of Greek comic plots, themes, and conventions by Plautus and Terence is a great success story indeed.

If the 270s marked the end of the productive era of Greek comedy, it was very soon thereafter (240) that Livius Andronicus came to Rome from Tarentum to produce Latin translations of Greek drama for Roman games.[55] The work of the first pioneering guild of writers and actors soon yielded full-fledged adaptations. Plautus' awareness of his role in this process is evident as he apologizes in the programmatic prologue to *Captivi* for offering no foul language, stock characters, or dishonest pander: his audience may expect, even demand, such things, but the poet will follow his own muse. In the anti-prologue to *Andria*, Terence famously challenges convention and defends himself against charges of "contaminating" (mingling) his Greek models. He implicitly rejects the notion—the rigid standard of his rivals—that Greek models are sacrosanct classics embodying the fullness of plot, character, and convention. By asserting creative authority to appropriate and modify the work of his predecessors, Terence helped establish New Comedy as an open-ended and generative tradition freed from antiquarian strictures to endure as a living practice down to the present.

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[54] Storey (2003, 1–6) and Gentili (1979).

[55] See Rusten (2010), "Short History" on the debate among German scholars (Leo, Fraenkel, Jachmann), and the "Freiburg School" of Lefèvre: to what extent are Plautine scripts "translations" that follow Greek models, and how much can we detect of original "Plautine" invention (in the works of Plautus)? For more detail on "barbarous versions of Greek Comedy," see N.J. Lowe (2007, 88–90) and Gentili (1979).

5. *Late Antique and Byzantine Criticism*

The story of the critical reception of Greek comedy in late antiquity into the Middle Ages must be gleaned from a few illustrious authors such as Lucian, Plutarch, and Athenaeus and a miscellany of other sources, largely *testimonia* marshaled in the service of modern textual criticism and exegesis: scholia, lexica such as the *Suda*, a host of "book fragments,"[56] anonymous essays "On Comedy," (especially Koster *Prolegomenon* III), and the contributions of scholars such as Platonios, Johannes Tzetzes, and Demetrios Triclinius—sources that figure prominently in several chapters of this volume, those of Nesselrath and Sommerstein in particular. A critical bridge between Alexandrian and Byzantine learning was Didymus "Bronze-Guts," whom sources identify both as a "contemporary of Cicero and Antony" and "an Alexandrian."[57] His biography is uncertain, but it is clear that he was the first to synthesize the scholarship before him into variorum editions of Aristophanes and other poets. Although there is evidence in extant Aristophanes scholia of several such syntheses well into late antiquity, chronological and substantive priority in this process belongs to the prolific first-century polymath. Didymus had a greater interest in history and social context than did his Alexandrian predecessors. Citations of his work show that he consulted a broad range of sources, including fourth-century historians and specialized monographs such as that of Ammonios mentioned above.

The term "old scholia" is shorthand for the archetype of our extant material that emerged from a long process of successive compilations of ancient notes beginning with Didymus, passing through the hands of a certain Symmachus, and ending in fourth- or fifth-century Constantinople.[58] In this period the format of a self-standing commentary gave way to marginal annotation suitable for the codex. The Byzantine reception sharpens the great divide noted above: the other poets of Old Comedy are largely passed over, indeed neglected, in favor of Aristophanes.[59] It

[56] For a useful catalogue of these sources, see Rusten (2010). On the comic scholia, see Dickey (2007, 28–31) and N.G. Wilson (2007a).

[57] Pfeiffer (1968, 276), Dunbar (1995, 38–40).

[58] Dover (1968a, 132) is critical of White (1912), who believed "that a late commentary on Aristophanes was transferred wholesale to the margins of an Aristophanes codex in the fourth or fifth century AD, and that this codex was the sole ancestor of the minuscule archetype of our extant manuscripts." Dover concludes that "although the Aristophanes scholia are ultimately the product of the ancient study of Aristophanes, the genealogy of any given scholion may be very different from that of its immediate neighbour."

[59] Outside the Aristophanes catalogue the *Demes* of Eupolis appears to have been the

is not surprising, then, if Greek comedy failed to generate sophisticated reception and criticism *as theater* in the middle ages: "Greek Comedy" was now a literary antique to be studied rather than an organic, living art from.[60] The so-called Byzantine triad of plays—*Wealth*, *Clouds*, *Frogs*—represents the narrowest result of this process in later centuries when learning in all areas was at low ebb. Even with this "safe" selection from Aristophanes, the mind boggles imagining *Clouds*, for example, as a school text a full millennium after its first performance. Not only were there fewer plays in circulation, but also their substance was increasingly archaic and difficult for contemporary readers. Plutarch's rather modern-sounding complaint is symptomatic: already in his day (late first century CE), he observes, no one could understand Greek (Old) Comedy without constantly referring to a learned authority.[61] This difficulty is clearly relevant to the epitome of the "Comparison between Menander and Aristophanes" (*Moralia* 853a–854d). The somewhat reductive commentary expresses disapproval of Aristophanes for mixing "much incongruence and dissimilarity; a tragic element and a comic; the pretentious and the prosaic; the obscure and the commonplace; grandeur and elevation; vulgar garrulity and nauseating nonsense." The Old Comic poet fails "even to assign appropriate and suitable language to individual characters." Menander's realistic and urbane style, in contrast, is much more to the critic's liking. It is "polished and … harmoniously united … It gives a single impression and maintains its uniformity by means of common, everyday words that are in normal use." We observe here a narrow sense of literary decorum on the part of a reader alienated from the world and poetics of Old Comedy. At the same time, as an early analysis of dramatic characterization in the modern sense, this essay merits a place in the annals of comic criticism.[62] It is worth noting, furthermore, that Plutarch makes extensive use of comedy in his *Lives*, thereby implicitly endorsing the genre as a cultural and historical resource.[63]

There is, however, a *tertium quid* between Roman theatrical reception and the scholarly enterprise of Alexandria and late antiquity. In the works

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best-known Comedy in antiquity: fr. 102 is widely cited in mediaeval sources, and the Cairo papyrus (fr. 99) attests to the circulation of *Demes* as late as the fifth century CE. See Telo (2007).

[60] White (1912, lxiv–lxvii) and N.G. Wilson (1983, 20–21, 33–36).

[61] Cratinus *testimonium* 32 Kassel-Austin.

[62] Dobrov (1995a).

[63] The bulk of extant comic fragments concerning Pericles are found in Plutarch's *Life*.

of Athenaeus and Lucian, we see the influence of Greek comic themes and language in nondramatic literature. A particularly rich source of comic material is furnished by Athenaeus of Naucratis (early third century CE). His sprawling *Deipnosophistae* reveals an insatiable appetite for linguistic trivia and comedy. It is our good fortune to have such a storehouse of information from a time when its author still had access to sources reflecting a fair measure of Alexandrian scholarship (even if second-hand). If we look ahead to the era of Byzantine scholars such as Tzetzes and Triclinius, we see that, by contrast, the stream of information will have dried to a trickle. Athenaeus concentrates especially on Middle Comedy and represents it vividly in its full gastronomic glory: one of the "deipnosophists" even claims to have read eight hundred plays from this period alone (8.336d)! The very selection (κρίσις) by Athenaeus of authors, passages, and topics is a significant act of criticism. If the Alexandrian and Byzantine selection favored Old Comedy for the authenticity of the lexicon and usage, then Athenaeus was keenly attuned to the riches of Middle Comedy in a way that emphasizes its unique features: food catalogues, lavish spreads, parasites, cooks, and hetairai.[64] The fragments bequeathed by him possess great powers of suggestion. We see the development of domestic plots and a style of parody that stands in contrast to the Old Comedy of Aristophanes and Cratinus. Certain bands in the thematic spectrum are especially bright. Nesselrath, for example, has detected important trends in mythological parody in the fourth century—a fascinating glimpse into a world where Athenaeus is our only guide.[65] If criticism suggests "selection," then *Deipnosophistae* is quite valuable as a "critical" document on comedy from the post-Alexandrian period.

Athenaeus is straightforward and compulsive in his citation of Greek comedy, while Lucian deployed comic language and themes more allusively for the enjoyment of a learned (πεπαιδευμένος) reader. The outlandish proto-science fiction of *Verae Historiae* owes a great deal to Aristophanic invention and fantasy in its humor and incongruous violation of logic. There is a clear and direct line from this sort of

[64] McClure (2003, 39) notes that "[t]he popularity of hetaeras in this genre in turn influenced the biographical tradition and its numerous accounts of the amorous liaisons of comic poets with hetaeras … Athenaeus most often draws on the comic plays for their prosopographical references."

[65] Nesselrath (1995).

"Aristophanic" narrative through Rabelais[66] to Swift.[67] In another mode, Lucian mingles various themes of Greek comedy with the form of Platonic dialogue in *De Parasito* and *Lexiphanes*.[68] In the sense of a broader reception, Lucian's *Philopseudes* and *Lucius* have enjoyed special popularity in literary adaptations.[69] It is significant that the work of transmission and scholarly commentary bore fruit in the form of nondramatic narratives, including the novel. Lucian, in particular, has served to project the themes of Greek comedy to a realm beyond the theater down to the realm of modern fantastic fiction.[70] An enthusiastic critic declares that

> Aristophanes has been identified behind the birth of Western Literary Criticism, the Western notion of Freedom of Speech, the transformation of folktale into narrative fiction, Platonic irony, Menippean satire, Juvenalian vituperation, Swift's satire, Sterne's novels, eighteenth-century German classicism, humorous journalism, and the tradition of the political cartoon.[71]

Many of the commonly cited "Koster *Prolegomena*," though impossible to date precisely, belong to a later period of scholarly activity.[72] Rooted without doubt in ancient learning, the short essays (summaries)

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[66] Stevens (1958, 24–28) documents a more-than-passing acquaintance with Aristophanes on the part of Rabelais: Pantagruel is a modern Strepsiades, while Gaster combines the Aristophanic personages of Wealth and Poverty. "Rabelais has been more influenced," notes Stevens (1958, 28), "by the ideas and technique of Aristophanes than by his words."

[67] Nordell (2000) notes that "Jonathan Swift relies on Aristophanes' *The Clouds* and its stereotypical views and stagecraft to structure *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Tale of a Tub*, and other works. For example, in Part III of *Gulliver's Travels*, the flying island of La Puta is Socrates' suspended basket … Gulliver's solipsism and antilogy are traceable to *The Clouds*."

[68] See the commentary of Nesselrath (1985) for details on *De Parasito* and comedy.

[69] In the first instance one thinks of Goethe's *Der Zauberlehrling* (Sorcerer's Apprentice) and the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius. See also Nesselrath (1990b).

[70] On the "True History of Science Fiction," see Westfahl (1998, 1–36).

[71] Hall and Wrigley (2007, 2): "Marcel Duchamp traced the roots of Dada's farcical spirit directly to Aristophanic scenarios … *Birds*, *Frogs*, and *Wasps* are routinely invoked in connection with fables of zoomorphism from Aesop and Apuleius to Kafka and Orwell … More than one feminist novel about women taking over the reins of power in the modern world has been inspired by *Lysistrata*."

[72] Much of this material in Koster (1975) is impossible to date precisely. For the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, as we have seen, the range of proposed dates is quite broad. Highlights of late antique and Byzantine scholarship in Koster include two essays of Platonios (Koster I, II), a brief handlist of comic poets, "The Anonymous On Comedy" (III), the *Prolegomena* of Tzetzes (XIa), the *Anonymus Crameri* (XIb–c), the *Tractatus Coislinianus* (XV), the scholiast to Dionysius Thrax (XVIII), and the lives of Aristophanes (XXVII–XXIX).

of Platonios, the *Tractatus*, the ancient biographies of Aristophanes, and a series of anonymous treatises Περὶ Κωμῳδίας are to be assigned to the vast and largely barren Byzantine landscape. Along with nuggets of literary history that vary in quality and detail, we find in the anonymous essays *On Comedy* a doctrine relating the evolution of the genre to changes in political climate. The free lampoon (ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν) emerges as a defining feature and an indicator of creative vigor. Comedy is alleged to have its roots in a "village" (κώμη) practice whereby insult and injustice were publicly denounced.[73] The Athenians formalized this practice by assigning poets to the task; in the first phase of its existence, the genre engaged in open criticism targeting influential and wealthy citizens. The latter gradually exerted their power to suppress lampoons ὀνομαστί. In response to this pressure, according to this account, the playwrights resorted to indirect means of representation such as burlesque of myth and tragedy.[74] By Menander's time the explicit lampoon was abandoned, leaving only incidental jabs at outsiders and the disenfranchised. Despite being somewhat reductive and unreliable, the anonymous essays *On Comedy* offer valuable details and certain insights that overlap with the views of the Old Oligarch.[75] Athenian comedy at the outset is seen to coincide with democratic discourse: while the demos is occasionally criticized as a group, influential and wealthy citizens (and other collective enemies of the demos) are punished in aggressive attacks ὀνομαστί. The demos, in contrast, is exhorted to improve their behavior without being given much in the way of explicit recommendations. This critical dynamic naturally suffered with changes in the political landscape in a way that suggests a close evolutionary connection between comedy and democracy. In modern discussions of the political function of comedy such as the chapters in this volume by Storey, Rosen, and Olson, the anonymous essays *On Comedy* as well as the Old Oligarch serve as

[73] *Anonymous de Comoedia* IV. There is a certain tension here between city (malefactors) and country (victims).

[74] Cf. Koster Prolegomena XV 32 (Tractatus Coislinianus [= Janko VII]):

Διαφέρει ἡ κωμῳδία τῆς λοιδορίας, ἐπεὶ ἡ μὲν λοιδορία ἀπαρακαλύπτως τὰ προσόντα κακὰ διέξεισιν, ἡ δὲ δεῖται τῆς καλουμένης ἐμφάσεως.

"Comedy differs from abuse, since abuse rehearses without concealment the bad (actions and qualities) attaching (to people), but (comedy) requires the so-called *emphasis*." See Dobrov (forthcoming).

[75] It is, of course, misleading to generalize these diverse prolegomena into an undifferentiated mass. There are important differences and striking points of detail that distinguish them. One of the most important works to survey these texts with a specific scholarly agenda remains Nesselrath (1990a).

inevitable points of departure. To this critical set we must also add the two treatises by Platonios.

The two surveys of Greek comedy attributed to Platonios are impossible to date precisely. The sources reflected in "On the Different Types of Comedy" and "On the Different Styles of the Comic Poets" suggest, at the earliest, the early Byzantine period.[76] Though quite derivative, these epitomes of longer works draw on scholarship beyond the anonymous treatises *On Comedy*.[77] For one, the Peripatetic influence is evident, especially in the clear schematization of the account: the tripartite division of comedy and the classic triad of poets with three distinct styles of which Aristophanes represents the "middle path." Platonios' chronology and literary-historical schema is flawed, but his commentary on poetic styles of the triad is superior to what we find in the anonymous essays. Intriguing are the notions that the choregic system was disrupted by the oligarchy and that inadequate funding was responsible for formal changes in the fourth century, such as the elimination of parabasis and the chorus. Platonios associates the aggressive manner of Cratinus with Archilochean iambos, whereas Aristophanes allows "charm to flow through his jokes." This critic is interested in the deeper comic "idea" and plot, for which the "vivid imagination" (φαντασία) of Eupolis earns highest marks. Storey (2003) persuasively interprets this poet's parabatic "imagination" in terms of choral imagery, a subject unique to the critical work of Platonios. Moreover, Eupolis is significantly characterized as "sublime," a term that intersects with the critical lexicon of Longinus.[78]

Between the age of Justinian and the Renaissance associated with the House of the Palaeologi (1261–1453), the critical stream narrows, as noted, despite a few bright points such as the intellectual revival associated with Photius (810–893). Pride of place in the *scholia recentiora* is given to the triad comprised of *Clouds*, *Frogs*, and *Wealth*. The surviving commentaries of Johannes Tzetzes (ca. 1110–1180) and Thomas Magister (1275–1350)[79] concentrate primarily on the triad, while Magister's

[76] Perusino (1989, 13); citing Platonios' apparent firsthand experience of Menander in performance Kaibel (1898, 48) suggested the early centuries of the Common Era. S.D. Olson (2007), by contrast, places Platonios in the late Byzantine period. Storey (2003, 46) suggests a range of 100–500 CE for the author. See also Nesselrath (1990a, 30–34).

[77] Perusino (1989) includes translation and commentary. The Greek titles are Περὶ διαφορᾶς κωμῳδιῶν and Περὶ διαφορᾶς χαρακτήρων. While not the *communis opinion*, there is reason to suspect that these brief sketches are summaries of longer treatises (see Perusino [1989, 13] and Storey [2003, 46]).

[78] For Platonios on Eupolis, see Storey (2003, 46–51).

[79] The work of thirteenth-century scholars Maximus Planudes and Manuel Moscho-

pupil Demetrius Triclinius went further, producing a systematic recension of *Knights*, *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, and *Birds*. For the first time since the Alexandrian heyday, a scholar collated the available evidence and put his hand to editing entire plays with aggressive modification and correction into the bargain—a fortunate circumstance in light of Triclinius' influence into the modern period.[80] Despite certain limitations, Triclinius had a better grasp of metrics than did his Byzantine predecessors and exerted a largely positive influence on the texts of these plays down through the beginnings of the printed tradition.[81] In more ways than one, we mark the dawn of the modern era with the fall of Byzantium, looming innovations in book production, and the cultural changes associated with the Renaissance.[82] The renewed interest in classical learning among European intellectuals was to be rewarded with a fairly rich sampling of Aristophanes, but there would be a considerable delay before the "discovery" of Menander from the middle of the nineteenth century.

Modern Criticism

The subsequent chapters in this volume offer a wide-ranging and critical account of recent work on Greek comedy. It remains here only to identify the more important trends and lines of inquiry for which the Aldine edition of Aristophanes is a convenient point of departure. The "Gutenberg Revolution" changed the landscape of scholarship by means of the wide distribution of texts in way that stemmed further corruption. The first printed editions of classical authors—1498 and 1516 for Aristophanes—mark the beginning of a new era in which the "raw data" available in manuscripts, papyri, and book fragments began to be collated and published in accordance with the evolving discipline of textual criticism. Indeed, from the Renaissance onward, "criticism" in classical studies was closely bound up with textual criticism, linguistic research, and

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poulos, while attested in the scholia, is harder to assess. Neither appears to have written a complete running commentary on a play of Aristophanes.

[80] On the sources of the Aldine and subsequent printed editions, see the chapter by Sommerstein in this volume. See also N.G. Wilson (1992), Sicherl (1979), and Lowry (1979).

[81] We also have Tzetzes' notes on *Birds* and an introduction to *Knights*. On Triclinius as an editor, see Sommerstein in this volume. See also N.G. Wilson (1962).

[82] Between the lifetimes of Tzetzes and Triclinius, a significant divide in the mediaeval tradition of Aristophanes is marked by the sack of Constantinople in 1204. See the chapter of Sommerstein in this volume for detail on this point.

translation. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, however, the classics were at the heart of a nascent humanism that, among other projects, broke with mediaeval strictures to develop new intellectual and philological tools for the study of antiquity. Indeed, the historians of scholarship have chronicled how much was at stake in a commitment to Greek and Latin texts in Erasmus' day. "Only the humanists of that time," notes Pfeiffer,[83] "formed a supranational group of kindred spirits which tried to save Europe from complete cultural disruption."

From the sixteenth-century humanists through the period of German Neohellenism, two centuries later, there was rapid intellectual and technical progress on all fronts. F.A. Wolf famously promoted Scaliger's notion of *Altertumswissenschaft*[84] as embracing all branches of classical learning, thereby establishing the necessary conditions for modern appreciation of Greek comedy in particular. Many cultural domains, including social history and dramaturgy, were naturally overshadowed by the priority of linguistic, lexical, and textual research.[85] Moreover, in comparison with the text of other authors, that of the major comic poets was slow to be established. Aristophanes had to wait until the close of the nineteenth century to coincide with a new era for Menander. There followed a gradual extension of research beyond textual, lexical, and grammatical matters to comprehend a broader field of social and aesthetic issues. Dover offers this metaphor to illustrate the evolution in method:[86]

> A scholar who tries to explain a difficult passage of a Greek text may be conceived as exploring a complex of concentric circles; the innermost circle encloses the immediate context of the passage, the outermost the whole of human experience. The right path to pursue is long and spiral; the average interpreter of Greek Comedy in the nineteenth century tended to follow a path that was short and straight. Atomising his text, he considered each sentence in its relation to the lexical, grammatical, and metrical norms continuously extracted by learning and devotion from his vast inheritance.

[83] Pfeiffer (1976, 82).
[84] Pfeiffer (1976, 183).
[85] It is worth noting here the valuable contribution of J.G. Droysen's translation of Aristophanes in three volumes (1835; 1837; 1838) at a time when not many were reading the author fluently. The introductions to the individual plays as well as his essays from this period exhibit a historian's sensibility and set a high standard for scholarship on comedy.
[86] Dover (1968a, 123). Dover (1968a, 126) notes in a similar vein that "the late nineteenth century school which regarded linguistic abnormality as aesthetically objectionable or even morally depraved is not a good master in the study of Comic language."

This metaphor is extended to sharpen the contrast between periods in terms of scholarly method and outlook. Transcending the "purely linguistic" hermeneutics of the nineteenth century, the twentieth century is marked by "generic studies, the extension to literary form of the methods of collection and classification previously applied to linguistic data." Indeed, in all branches of the humanities, the programmatic work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss prompted the extension of linguistic methodology to comprehend a wide range of cultural phenomena.[87] In light of the ongoing discovery of important texts on papyrus, however, the study and criticism of comedy can never "graduate" from the philological enterprise. The priority of historical and grammatical research has grounded the study of Greek comedy, restraining it from critical excesses observed in work on other genres and in other areas of the humanities. Another distinguishing characteristic of Old comedy—and a formidable impediment to reception and appreciation—has been its obscene language and imagery. For readers and translators of earlier generations, it has not been easy to negotiate the extreme topicality and coarseness of Aristophanes in particular. The acceptance and frank translation of comic obscenity is a recent phenomenon for which J.J. Henderson (1975) is a watershed. The other defining characteristic of modern scholarship on comedy has been a move beyond the three Aristotelian unities (action, place, time) to realize "the full implications of the simple truism that Comedy is *drama*."[88] Indeed, performance criticism, following the lead of scholars such as Carlo Russo, Oliver Taplin, and Niall Slater, has flourished in the last two decades.

The story of the text is told in this volume by Sommerstein, Nesselrath, and Ireland. Comedy as a "late bloomer" had to wait until the 1920s for an edition of Aristophanes with an adequate critical apparatus (Coulon's Budé). N.G. Wilson's new Oxford Text and accompanying *Studies* is a superb and long-awaited update. Although the discovery and assessment of Menander is a phenomenon of a different order, it also belongs squarely to the last century.[89] For a field long dominated by one name, the physical resurrection of its most famous and influential poet

[87] Culler (2002). Despite the inevitable name dropping by classicists who wish to burnish their theoretical profile, exponents of other critical trends from the Marxist-inflected New Historicism to varieties of psychoanalysis have not yet made an appreciable contribution to the study of comedy.

[88] Dover (1968a, 124).

[89] The standard texts are Sandbach (1990) and W.G. Arnott's Loeb (1979–2000). Handley (1965) and Gomme and Sandbach (1973) are major commentaries.

has been a great stroke of fortune. The last decade has brought us the finishing touches on the Kassel-Austin edition of the fragments, completion of the definitive Groningen scholia,[90] and the last installments in the series of Oxford commentaries on Aristophanes. Since the distinct tradition of each play has merited separate treatment, that series now spans a number of decades from Dover's edition of *Clouds* (1968b) to the *Thesmophoriazusae* of Olson-Austin (2004).[91] Beyond the philological work of text and commentary, there have been advances in our understanding of the elements of comedy, ranging from dramatic structure and metrics to linguistic usage. The lines of inquiry established by the foundational work of Zielinski (1885) and White (1912), for example, are explored in the following chapters by leading exponents of these subfields Bernhard Zimmermann and Adreas Willi.

The starting point for modern literary history of Greek Comedy is Meineke (1839). This critical survey of the genre as a whole represents a feat never quite matched and attempted only a few times since by Norwood (1931) and more recently by Rusten (2010).[92] A distinctive critical shift between the first and last of these works is the transition from a literary-philological perspective to a broad-spectrum approach that includes history, archaeology, epigraphy, papyrology, and performance. In 1927 Pickard-Cambridge inaugurated a series of influential studies informed by archaeology that have extended the scope of literary criticism to embrace the wider contexts of the dramatic competitions.[93] Much modern work is concerned with the sociopolitical and visual dimensions of comedy as performance. In their respective chapters following, Csapo and J.R. Green outline the ways in which the physical circumstances of the theater and festival are brought to bear on the interpretation of the plays. From the work of Trendall, Webster, and Taplin, we have learned to respect the evidence of vase painting in this connection, at times with surprising results, such as evidence for the fourth-

[90] See also the excellent new work on the scholia such as Dickey (2007) and Nünlist (2009).

[91] The Oxford series will soon be complete with new editions of the last few plays, including J.J. Henderson's *Knights*.

[92] In this series G. Murray (1933) deserves mention. E. Segal (2001), a "grand tour of comic theater over the centuries," is an erudite and very personal survey of the genre. The ancient "heart" of Aristophanes and Plautus dies a cerebral death at the hands of Beckett et al. For New Comedy in particular, see Webster (1974), Goldberg (1980), Handley and Hurst (1990), Vogt-Spira (1992), Zagagi (1994), Walton and Arnott (1996), Blume (1998), and Blanchard (2007).

[93] See Pickard-Cambridge (1968) and Green's chapter in this volume.

century reception of Aristophanes in Magna Graecia.[94] Complementing the robust trend in performance criticism are studies such as Stone (1981) and Wiles (1991), on Aristophanic costume and masks in New Comedy, respectively.[95]

The literary-historical terrain is more crowded now, dispelling the misleading isolation of Aristophanes and Menander. Dover's classic introduction to Old Comedy (1972) has been followed by a number of works that offer a broad survey of the evolving genre.[96] The publication of *PCG* has prompted important studies such as Nesselrath (1990a), Storey (2003), and Teló (2007) that represent a growing interest in the relatively neglected playwrights such as Cratinus, Eupolis, Alexis, Eubulus, and Antiphanes.[97] Accordingly, the link between the democratic polis and drama that informs the comments of the Old Oligarch, Platonios, and the anonymous essays "On Comedy" has generated an extensive bibliography.[98] A number of symposia in the wake of Winkler and Zeitlin (1990) exemplify the now-standard practice to situate a given play or a poet in a specific historical moment with an eye to attendant sociopolitical implications.[99] Following the opening salvo of Gomme (1938), on the one side are marshaled a few who would emphasize the ludic nature of the comic competition, while on the other are critics who explore the serious and engagé aspects of comic theater.[100] Olson's balanced discussion in this volume confirms the warning of Silk (2000a) that "serious" is too blunt an instrument—indeed the wrong critical tool—for this subject.[101] Beyond the fifth century, the poets and themes of Middle Comedy

[94] Taplin (1993) and Csapo in this volume.

[95] Poe (1996) challenges the assumptions made by Webster, Wiles, and other authorities about the mask catalogue in Pollux 4.133–154. On costume, see also Compton-Engle (2003).

[96] R. Hunter (1985), Nesselrath (1990a), Scodel (1993), Dobrov (1995a), Csapo (2000), Silk (2000a), Harvey and Wilkins (2000), Zimmermann (2006a), and N.J. Lowe (2007).

[97] See, for example, Bakola (2009), Storey (2005), R. Hunter (1983), W.G. Arnott (1996), and Konstantakos (2000).

[98] MacDowell (1995) is a standard work on this topic. Konstan (1995) is a collection of previously published papers with a purported bearing on ideology.

[99] For example, Sommerstein et al. (1993), Csapo and Slater (1995), Dobrov (1997a), and Harvey and Wilkins (2000).

[100] For a corrective to the notion of drama as thoroughly "democratic" (written, performed, and viewed almost exclusively by citizens), see Kaimio (1999).

[101] See N.J. Lowe (2007, 58–60) and Heath (1997). For a variety of positions on the relationship between comedy and the polis, see A. Edwards (1993), Carey (1994), J.J. Henderson (1990; 1998; 2007), and Rosenbloom (2002).

have a growing bibliography, while studies of the distinctive legal and social aspects of New Comedy adjust reductive notions of an apolitical and purely domestic Menander.[102]

Inquiry into the social landscape of Greek comedy began in the Hellenistic period with the "rouges' galleries" of scholars such as Ammonius and Herodicus noted above. Ehrenberg (1962) is a modern classic to which many have added their contributions on topics ranging from gender to dialect.[103] The many capable writers on diverse topics from ethnicity to intertextuality confirm Eagleton's truism that there can be no "neutral" position in literary criticism.[104] In this connection it is worth noting that the so-called New Criticism—the dominant approach to interpretation in classical studies since the Second World War—has been of limited value for a genre intrinsically bound up with its immediate contexts and a swarm of extratextual sources.[105] As elements of performance and *littérature engagée*, the scripts of Greek comedy resist being treated as a "closed system." The early parabases of Aristophanes, in particular, force an explicit confrontation with the persona of the poet and his agenda.[106] Structural anthropology, in contrast, has been more enlightening in its application to comedy. In this volume A.M. Bowie brings to comedy the methodology and insights of the French school: "One can analyze a culture," he explains, "by looking for certain patterns of thought which are used to construct, order and talk about the world, and which will appear in a variety of cultural contexts, such as myths, festivals, literature, painting, sculpture."[107]

It is a paradox that the most playful and self-referential of genres has been the most difficult to theorize. Humor studies and Greek comedy have yet to engage in a sustained conversation, although Robson (2006),

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[102] For Middle Comedy, see W.G. Arnott in this volume (along with Nesselrath [1990a] and Dobrov [1995a]). On New Comedy, see Scafuro (1997), Lape (2004), and Ireland's chapter in this volume. Katsouris (1995) is the fullest bibliography on Menander up to its date.

[103] On gender see Henry (1985), Wiles (1989), Brown (1990a; 1993), Taaffe (1993), Rosivach (1998), McClure (1999), and Foley (forthcoming). On language see Willi (2003a).

[104] Eagleton (1996, x): "Without some literary theory, however unreflective and implicit, we would not know what a 'literary work' was in the first place, or how we were to read it. Hostility to literary theory usually means an opposition to other people's theories and an oblivion of one's own."

[105] See Storey and Allan (2005, 231–232).

[106] Hubbard (1991) and Platter (2007). On the parabasis see also Sifakis (1971a) and, in a cultural-anthropological vein, Rothwell (2007).

[107] A.M. Bowie (1993, 5) acknowledges the influence of Louis Gernet, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and Marcel Detienne.

N.J. Lowe (2007, 1–12) and Halliwell (forthcoming) are to be commended as steps in the right direction. To be sure, there has been interest in metaphor, parody, and theatricality from Newiger (1957) to Platter (2007). A productive trend in Aristophanes studies, inspired by Russo (1992) and exemplified by Bierl (2001), N.W. Slater (2002), and others, is concerned with the metafictional dialectic between stage and society: the interactive give and take among genres, poets, actors, and the spectator-polis. The extensive and explicit reworking of tragedy by Aristophanes is one of the poet's trademarks and is given special attention by Rau (1967) and Dobrov (2001). Among important critical contributions in recent years, Silk (2000a) deserves special mention as a wide-ranging and theoretically sophisticated treatment of Aristophanes and the comic tradition in general.[108] Reception studies are gaining momentum alongside a new surge of interest in performance criticism across the genre.[109] It is fitting to conclude on this note as the realization of Dover's critical turn—what Revermann (2006a, 7) calls "comic business," that is, how comedy "is designed to succeed both artistically and in the ephemeral competitive performance context for which it was originally conceived." This line of inquiry expresses nicely the aim of our field a whole—that is, to find what makes "comedy tick, and why it deserves to be reread, reperformed, and rethought." The essays that follow generously facilitate this enterprise and will make up for the shortcomings of this brief sketch.

[108] See also Goldhill's chapter "Comic Inversion and Inverted Commas" in Goldhill (1991, 167–222).

[109] For an overview of the issues and methods of performance criticism, see Revermann (2006a, 8–65). See also van Steen (2000), Holtermann (2004), and Hall and Wrigley (2007); for New Comedy, see Frost (1988) and Wiles (1991; 1997a; 1997b).

CHAPTER TWO

COMEDY, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY

S. Douglas Olson

Already two generations ago, the distinguished Greek historian A.W. Gomme could begin an essay titled "Aristophanes and Politics" with the observation that "[t]his is a threadbare subject" and an apology for taking the matter up again.[1] Gomme argued that the question of the political opinions expressed in Aristophanes' plays ought simply to be set aside as unhelpful and unimportant. This view has not met with much assent. Indeed, since Gomme's time, and especially in the last two decades or so, the question of the political function of Old Comedy generally and of Aristophanic comedy in particular has been increasingly hotly debated. The reasons for this interest are not far to seek.

Of Aristophanes' eleven surviving plays, a solid majority (*Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, *Birds*, *Lysistrata*, and *Ecclesiazusae*) deal with what can, on even a relatively narrow definition of the term, be referred to as "political" issues. The hero or heroine confronts a seemingly intractable problem created by mass behavior or institutions, be it the Assembly's bumbling inability or unwillingness to deal effectively with matters of grave public concern (*Acharnians*, *Peace*, *Lysistrata*, *Ecclesiazusae*), or the disruptions produced by the democratic lawcourts (*Wasps*), or the general thickheadedness and bad behavior of the people as a whole (*Knights*, *Birds*); he or she devises an extraordinary scheme to correct the situation; and the consequences play themselves out for the hero and a scattering of Athens' residents. Less is known of Aristophanes' contemporaries, but the surviving titles and fragments leave no doubt that many of them took up similar themes. Nor do Aristophanes' plays represent purely private visions of how the world might be reformed, for comedy was performed with public financial support at major civic festivals, and the poets' individual desire to win the prize must have

[1] Gomme's essay (1938) (discussed in detail in part 2a) has been repeatedly reprinted, most recently in E. Segal (1996), where it appears in an abridged form unsuitable for scholarly citation.

forced them to echo or appeal in one way or another to the prejudices and concerns of an audience dominated by average democrats (although see Sommerstein's views, discussed in part 2e, below). The surviving plays and fragments thus have the potential to tell us a great deal about what was—and could be—said on matters of perceived general concern in a large public forum in Athens in the Peloponnesian War years and the first few decades of the fourth century.

The difficulty for the modern reader is that the significance of all this manifestly political content is difficult to judge. Much of what is said in Aristophanic comedy is vague or ambiguous, while much that is clear appears to be intended as tongue-in-cheek. Even more important, we do not know how contemporary audiences reacted to the arguments and opinions put forward on the comic stage. Was what was said there taken to represent the authoritative voice of the Athenian people? Or of a small group of intellectuals determined—perhaps even encouraged and empowered—to guide and assist the Assembly and the law courts in their deliberations? Was comedy instead a means of expressing dissent from the dominant democratic order, tolerated by average citizens only because they failed to grasp the significance of the assertions it made about them and the state? Or was this simply a form of crude popular entertainment, which alluded to issues that were to the fore in the popular mind but had no substantial effect on how anyone thought or voted in other settings?

This essay has two goals: to make sense for a nonspecialist reader of some of the most important ancient and modern positions on the question of the political significance of Old Comedy, and to offer a fresh response to that question. Part 1 examines ancient opinions on the role Old Comedy played in democratic Athens. Part 2 summarizes and critiques modern contributions to the debate by Gomme, de Ste. Croix, Heath, J.J. Henderson, Sommerstein, Ober, and Rosenbloom. Part 3 discusses what is known of the origin of political comedy in Athens, and on that basis attempts to make sense of the attitudes expressed in Aristophanes' plays and their appeal to the audience. I should state at the outset that I am concerned with "politics" in a quite traditional sense: the question of the way in which the city is and ought to be governed through—or in spite of—its formal institutional structures. "Sexual politics," the "politics of the body," and the like, while interesting and important areas of scholarly inquiry, lie outside the bounds of this essay.[2]

[2] I therefore make no reference in what follows to McGlew (2002) or N.W. Slater

1. *Ancient Views of the Political Function of Old Comedy*

Our knowledge of ancient views of the political function of Old Comedy comes from three main sources: (1) some brief remarks in the *Constitution of the Athenians* by an anonymous author now generally referred to in the English-speaking world as "the Old Oligarch" and identified (wrongly) in antiquity as the Athenian historian Xenophon; (2) a series of short, mostly anonymous essays on the history and form of Athenian comedy that seem to belong in their present form to the Byzantine period but probably draw on earlier sources, including Aristotle's *Poetics* (especially *de Comoedia* I, IV, V); and (3) scattered comments in Aristophanes' plays (especially *Acharnians*) about the intentions and effects of his comedies. Each source has problems and peculiarities, and each anticipates modern judgments on the question in one way or another.

a.

The Old Oligarch's essay on the Athenian constitution cannot be dated precisely, although internal evidence suggests that it was composed before 424 BCE,[3] and the consensus of modern scholarly opinion is that it was written sometime in the 440s or 430s. Whether the Old Oligarch is himself an Athenian is unclear, although he implies as much by referring at i.12 to policies "we [Athenians] have adopted" and he is obviously well acquainted with day-to-day life in the city. What matters more is that the Old Oligarch presents himself as both profoundly hostile to and reluctantly admiring of Athenian democracy. The situation in the city, he insists, is appalling: the worst elements are in control (e.g., i.4), any madman or fool who wishes can speak his mind on matters of public concern (i.6–9), festivals and the like have been converted into a means of extorting money from the rich (i.13), and the people dress so badly that it is impossible to strike a slave who gets in one's way, for fear of hitting a citizen (i.10). The Old Oligarch nonetheless concedes over

(2002), neither of which attempts a sustained contribution to the specific questions under discussion here.

[3] Thus Roscher in 1842 (followed by most recent commentators), noting that the claim at ii.5—that a land power cannot extend its military might more than a day or two's march away from its own territory—was decisively disproven by the Spartan general Brasidas' expedition to the Thracian coast that year. Roscher's thesis gains further support from the conflict between the Old Oligarch's claim at ii.18, that the people do not allow the demos to be mocked in Comedy, and the presence of a befuddled personified Demos onstage in Aristophanes' *Knights* (Lenaia 424).

and over again that if the demos (people) wishes to retain its hold on power, it has chosen the right way to do so, for much about the city that would appear depraved to an innocent aristocratic observer can on closer examination be seen to serve popular interests. The policy of assigning most public offices by lot, for example, might seem likely to lead to bad government. But an apparently more rational arrangement would allow the city to be taken over by "better" (i.e., wealthier) men, which would be contrary to what the people want (i.8–9); the system of allotment allows widespread access to public pay (i.3); and any duties that require real talent are distributed in a more careful and selective manner (i.3). Despite appearances, the democratic state is organized in a profoundly sensible way—at least from a democrat's point of view.

At ii.17, the Old Oligarch explains that Athens' democrats contrive to escape individual responsibility for whatever bad decisions the Assembly makes or whatever shortsighted public agreements it enters into, by blaming everything on the author of the motion and claiming that they personally were either absent on that day or opposed the idea. He then (ii.18) goes on, in his typically associative style, to insist that the Athenians do not allow the demos to be mocked (i.e., as a collective entity) in comedy "in order that they themselves not get a bad reputation." They do nonetheless allow individual citizens to be lampooned, since those attacked this way are likely to be "rich or well-born or powerful," while if average people are made fun of, it is because they interfere in others' business or want to have more than their peers.

The Old Oligarch is not a brilliant or incisive thinker; his argument is often clumsy and disjointed, his thoughts and analysis incoherent. Nor is he necessarily a reliable guide to the nuances of Athenian political society. Indeed, he openly presents himself as an outsider to the democratic state, for which he feels no sympathy, although he does claim to understand its workings better than might another man of the same political sympathies but with less practical experience of life in the city. That he spent much time in the Theater of Dionysus watching "good" people be attacked and "bad" people glorified is open to doubt. His comments on comedy nonetheless offer an important perspective on the political function of the genre in Athens in the period just before Aristophanes' appearance on the scene. For the Old Oligarch, comedy—like every institution in the contemporary city—has been carefully adapted to serve the interests of the demos. In his eyes, the genre is by its very nature a weapon, the chief function of which is to damage the reputation of one's enemies; and the basic premise of his argument requires that the people not allow this

weapon to be used against themselves. Instead, they harness the energy of the poets for their own purposes, by offering comedy the license to attack the rich as vigorously as it likes and to pour withering criticism on any member of the demos who seeks to betray his class. On this view, comedy is emphatically not a means of corporate self-criticism or the like, but one of the countless ways in which the Athenian people maintain control of the state and suppress or suborn dissent. Nor, as far as the Old Oligarch can tell, does the genre contain any dissenting or conflicting voices; what is said on stage reflects the unnuanced will of the demos speaking collectively and in pursuit of clear and specific political ends.

b.

According to the *Poetics* of the Athenian philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE), comedy is heir to the iambic tradition of abuse poetry in the same way that tragedy is heir to the epic tradition of Homer (esp. *Poetics* 1449a4–5).[4] Like the poetry of earlier authors such as Archilochus, comedy represents an imitation of the actions of base individuals, although its goal is not personal abuse but painless laughter (esp. *Poetics* 1448b26–27, 1449a32–37). Aristotle does not suggest that comedy has any larger social or political function, and the question is not obviously relevant to the argument he puts forward in his essay. He does nonetheless remark in passing that the Megarians claimed that the genre was invented in their state at a time when it was a democracy (*Poetics* 1448a31–32), an observation that seems to mark some awareness of a general connection between comedy and popular government.[5]

Similar but more developed arguments are put forward in a series of short essays On Comedy—many of them merely alternative versions of one another—preserved in the manuscripts of Aristophanes and other scattered sources, including the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, which Richard Janko argues can be traced back to a lost work of Aristotle.[6] Several of these essays are identified as drawn from the work of a certain Platonius, who ought probably to be assigned to the late Byzantine period. Janko's theories aside, little can be said about the source of this material except that it displays a passing acquaintance with some comic texts that have

[4] For the connections between comedy and iambic abuse poetry, see Rosen (1988), with the skeptical response of E.L. Bowie (2002).

[5] For an appropriately skeptical discussion of Megarian comedy and the historicity of Susarion (below), see Breitholtz (1960).

[6] Janko (1984).

now been lost, as well as with the *Poetics*, and that some of the information and arguments it preserves may derive from scholarly work done in the Library at Alexandria during the Hellenistic period. The historical value of many of the assertions in these essays about the origins of comedy in particular is dubious, and this is once again patently an outsider's perspective on the genre. The understanding of the social and political function of comedy put forward here nonetheless requires attention not only because it is based on material no longer accessible but also because it coincides so neatly—although without there being any evidence of a direct literary connection—with some of the conclusions drawn by the Old Oligarch.

According to anon. *de Comoedia* IV, the historical roots of comedy are to be sought in the villages (κῶμαι, here apparently to be taken "villages [of Attica];" cf. Arist. *Poetics* 1448a35–38), where "long ago" anyone who had been wronged went off by night to the place where his enemy lived, loudly announced what had been done (although without naming any names), and returned home. The next day the residents of the village—who had of course heard what was said—attempted to identify the malefactor, who was so shamed by the public discussion of his manners that he mended his ways. The residents of the city of Athens eventually realized that this was a good thing for the state and urged those who had been wronged to denounce their oppressors not in the countryside by night but in the marketplace. These denunciations were generally directed against the rich, and when they proved effective in further suppressing villainy, the Athenians assigned poets to mock anyone they wished with no constraints whatsoever; this was the sort of play written by Aristophanes. As comic invective became more sophisticated, the wealthy and those with political power, not wishing to be made fun of in public, forced the poets to replace undisguised personal assaults with riddles and allusions; this was the sort of play written by Plato Comicus (a younger contemporary of Aristophanes). Eventually even these oblique attacks were suppressed, and only foreigners and paupers could be mocked; this was the sort of play written by Menander (whose *floruit* falls at the very end of the fourth century).[7]

Anon. *de Comoedia* V offers a more detailed but closely related history of the genre, alleging that the earliest comedy, that of Susarion (second half of the sixth century, although there is little reason to believe

[7] Cf. anon. *de Comoedia* XI.b.2–35, XVI.1.12–17, XVIIIa.3–36, XXXIII.B.2.4–12.

he was a historical person) and his contemporaries, lacked any real dramatic structure and consisted only of "laughter" (cf. Arist. *Poetics* 1449b7–9). Cratinus (whose career in the Theater began around 460 and was coming to an end as Aristophanes' was beginning) then "added something beneficial to Comedy's appeal by speaking ill of wrongdoers and punishing them with Comedy, as if with a public whip" (*de Comoedia* V.7–19; cf. *de Comoedia* II.2–5, 16). The significance of this final remark is made clear by Platonius (*de Comoedia* I.1–31), who observes that in the time of Cratinus, Aristophanes, and Eupolis (a close contemporary and rival of Aristophanes, although he died earlier, sometime around 412), Athens was controlled by the demos. The comic poets were therefore free to make fun of generals, jurors who handled their duties badly, the greedy and depraved, and especially the rich, for the people applauded anyone who spoke badly of their enemies. The decline of democracy led the poets to exercise more caution in their dramas and to turn to topics such as mythological and dramatic parody (which appear to have been particularly important plot sources for early fourth-century comedy).

The anonymous essayists, like the Old Oligarch (but unlike Aristotle), argue that Old Comedy had a social and political function in the city, in that it called bad individual behavior to public attention in order to censure it. They also agree that during the years when the demos dominated Athens, it used comedy to punish its collective enemies, especially the rich, but add that comedy's barbs were frequently directed against popular leaders such as generals as well, to the extent that the fear and resentment this inspired among the political class shaped the entire history of the genre. Even more to the point, the anonymous essayists insist that comedy was intended from the first not just to control behavior (as the Old Oligarch believes) but to improve it, and they accordingly note that average citizens were sometimes denounced in the aggregate for what they had done (e.g., as jurors). What the anonymous essays *On Comedy* do not contain is any statement to the effect that the genre played a positive role in the city by offering advice about individual political issues or teaching the citizens what they ought to be or how they should behave.

c.

At the City Dionysia in 426 BCE, Aristophanes (who had presented his first play in 427 and was still a young man) staged a comedy titled *Babylonians*, which on one reading of the evidence created a considerable

uproar in the city. *Babylonians* is preserved in only a few small fragments, but ancient comments (scholia) in the margins of some manuscripts of *Acharnians* (performed at the Lenaea festival the next year) report that in the course of the play, the poet abused not only Cleon, the leading democratic politician of the day, but also Athenian officeholders of all sorts, including those who were merely chosen by lot ($\Sigma^{REΓ}$ *Acharnians* 378 = *Bab*. *test*. iv). What is left of the play shows that the people behaved like fools (fr. 67), perhaps when a flattering speech was made in the Assembly by foreign ambassadors (cf. *Acharnians* 633–640), and that the origin of the Peloponnesian War was blamed on local political corruption (fr. 84). According to the scholia to *Acharnians*, Cleon responded by seeking an indictment of Aristophanes, apparently from the city's Council (*Acharnians* 377–382 with $\Sigma^{REΓ}$ 378); what we know of Athenian legal procedure in this period suggests that he did not charge the poet with violating any particular law, but claimed that he had done the demos a grave collective wrong (a δημόσιον ἀδίκημα) by speaking ill of the city in the presence of foreigners (cf. *Acharnians* 502–503, 515–516). The charge (or alleged charge; see below) reflects the fact that large numbers of visitors attended the City Dionysia, which was also the time when the annual tribute payments from Athens' subject allies were due. The poet's insistence at *Acharnians* 643–635 that in the future an eagerness to see him and his plays would make the tribute more likely to arrive on time is most naturally taken to suggest that Cleon argued the opposite, viz. that what went on onstage in *Babylonians* could be expected to make collection more difficult by damaging the city's reputation.[8] Be that as it may, Cleon seems routinely to have cast himself as the protector of the people and to have denounced his opponents as traitors, conspirators, lovers of tyranny, and the like; and what little can be recovered of *Babylonians* suggests that he could easily have characterized it as presenting an unflattering picture of Athenian democracy. *Acharnians* 381–382 leaves no doubt that the Council nonetheless rejected the indictment. Why it did so is not specified, although the poet's claim that he had a relatively narrow escape would seem to imply either that a significant minority of the Council found Cleon's charge convincing or that a majority did so at first.[9]

[8] For another political and social outsider allegedly failing to understand the point of a comedy, see *Peace* 45–48, where an Ionian spectator in the Theater concludes that the dung beetle must be a riddling allusion to Cleon (now dead), "since he eats shit in Hades."

[9] Cf. *Acharnians* 630, 632, where in the course of a summary description of the poet's troubles, the Athenians are described first as ταχύβουλοι (swift to reach decisions) and then as μετάβουλοι (prone to change their minds).

As the parabasis in *Acharnians* begins, the chorus take up closely related themes, announcing that they are speaking on behalf of their poet who, they say, has been slandered by his enemies "for mocking the city and treating the people outrageously" (*Acharnians* 630–631), a patent allusion to Cleon's alleged reaction to *Babylonians*. Their poet's response is to insist that he has actually been bestowing a great benefit on the people; not only has he shown them the truth about what is done in their name in the allied states (*Acharnians* 642), but also, by mocking their stupidity and excessive credulity to their face, he has made them less likely to commit similar errors in the future (*Acharnians* 633–640). A comic poet's job, the chorus insist, is not to flatter or appease his audience by concealing their shortcomings. Instead, he ought to tell them the truth so as to render them happy in the long run, albeit at the price of some temporary discomfort (*Acharnians* 656–664, cf. 644–645). Indeed, the chorus go on to report (now obviously tongue in cheek) that the king of Persia asked a recent Spartan embassy whether it was about them or the Athenians that "that famous poet" said such nasty things, noting that whoever he abused would be immensely improved and thus rendered more likely to win the war (*Acharnians* 646–651). The Spartans' subsequent demand that Athens surrender the island of Aegina as a price for peace is accordingly to be understood as an attempt to get control not of the place itself but of Aristophanes, who must have had some personal connections there (*Acharnians* 652–654 with $\Sigma^{EI\Gamma}$ 654). That comedy's darts are sometimes directed against individual targets of the sort identified by the Old Oligarch and the anonymous essayists on the genre discussed in (1a) and (1b) above is clear from other Aristophanic parabases, such as *Wasps* 1030–1037 ~ *Peace* 752–760, where the poet's heroic struggle against the horrid Cleon-monster is described. But even there the real point is that the demos has failed to recognize its friends and enemies and as a result has been forced to rely on the poet as its volunteer guide and protector. Although comedy speaks for the people, it does not speak with their voice but as a wise counselor, whom the demos ought to support and applaud in direct proportion to the value of his advice. Very similar positions are adopted by Aristophanic characters elsewhere (esp. *Frogs* 686–687, 1008–1010), as well as by some ancient and modern commentators on the plays (e.g., *Peace Hyp*. III.36–38; cf. part 2 f).

Unlike the anonymous essayists discussed in part 1b, Aristophanes was an "insider" not just to Athenian society generally but also to the art of writing comedies in particular. Despite that fact—or perhaps because

of it—his claims as well cannot be taken at face value. As Ralph Rosen argues elsewhere in this volume, the story of the legal confrontation over *Babylonians* sketched out above may be at least in part a product of Hellenistic (and modern) scholarship's interest in extracting biographical data from literary sources; regardless of what was asserted onstage in *Acharnians* and then by ill-informed or overly venturesome commentators on the text, the historical Cleon may never have tried to indict the historical Aristophanes for doing injury to the Athenian people with his City Dionysia comedy of 426, although it suited the playwright's purposes to pretend he had.[10] If Aristophanes did in fact have trouble with Cleon over *Babylonians*, on the other hand, what is said in *Acharnians* about comedy's role in the city still cannot be taken as a disinterested statement of poetic policy, but must instead be understood as a retrospective attempt to justify what turned out to be a very controversial piece of theater; and it is telling that at *Acharnians* 497–500, Dicaeopolis is forced to argue in favor of the thesis that comedy can offer sage advice, implying that this was not the standard view of things. So, too, Cleon's claim that *Babylonians* damaged Athens' relations with her allies does not in and of itself prove that comedy was generally understood to have real-world political significance, and might just as easily be taken to suggest that Aristophanes' play was (allegedly) unusual in this regard. Dicaeopolis' summary at *Acharnians* 502–503 of the charges made against him [*sic*] the previous year, after all, leaves little doubt that the problem with his [*sic*] play had nothing to do with the reaction of the average Athenian, who might be expected to understand the "rules" of the genre. Instead, what Cleon claimed to be concerned about was what strangers to the city and its ways might make of a wide-ranging attack on Athens' democratic government, which is a very different matter and most naturally taken to suggest a corresponding lack of concern about the reaction of those more "in the know."[11] The Council's decision not to allow the case to go any further, at any rate, makes clear either that a majority of its members refused to believe that even foreigners could be convinced that comedy

[10] Cf. Rosen (1988, 63–64).

[11] That there was a fundamental if unwritten rule that nothing said or done onstage in a comedy should cause the Athenian people harm, more or less as the Old Oligarch implies (cf. 1.a above), seems clear. But this means only that comedy was functioning under the same strictures as everyone and everything else in this period, and does not suggest any specific anxiety about the potential impact of what was said on the comic stage.

had substantial practical political implications or that the play appealed to them, which is to say that Cleon misjudged his audience (cf. part 3).

Despite the claims advanced in *Acharnians* about the political significance of Aristophanic comedy, therefore, there is little positive reason to believe that this represents the general consensus of contemporary public opinion. Nor is it possible to demonstrate comedy's political importance by showing that Aristophanes' plays regularly had—or were even intended to have—a substantial effect on public policy. *Acharnians*, for example, expresses tremendous disaffection with the Peloponnesian War, but offers no serious suggestions as to how it ought to be brought to an end and concentrates instead on denouncing the universal doltishness of the Athenian people. And despite the play's first-place finish in the balloting at the end of the festival, the fighting went on for another four years, just as the democratic law-courts met unchanged after the second-place finish of *Wasps* in 422. Likewise, *Knights* took first place at the Lenaia in 424 with a plot consisting of an extended, vicious attack on Cleon and his control of the Assembly and the Council; but shortly thereafter the people elected Cleon as general (cf. *Clouds* 581–582), and he dominated Athens' political scene until his death in 421, despite Aristophanes' continued outspoken hostility toward him. None of this is to say that what went on the comic stage may not occasionally have struck a chord with the audience by seeming to express exactly what the majority of them were thinking at the moment. The call for national reconciliation at a time of terrible crisis in the parabasis of *Frogs*, for example, was so well received that Aristophanes was publicly commended and awarded a crown of olive (*anon. vit. Ar.* 35–39 = *test.* 1.35–39), and according to Dicaearchus (fr. 84 Wehrli), the play was produced a second time. But capturing the public mood is not the same as shaping it, and for the latter we have no compelling evidence. If Aristophanes really was concerned to offer the Athenian people concrete lessons about how to govern their state, they seem to have felt little interest in what he had to say. The fact that they so consistently awarded him the prize, however, leaves no doubt that they approved of his efforts, and the simplest conclusion would seem to be that—despite occasional self-serving claims to the contrary—his aim was not to teach them anything.[12]

[12] Thus already John Williams White (the greatest American Aristophanic scholar of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) in his introduction to Croiset (1909): "If Aristophanes was working for reform, as a long line of learned interpreters of the poet

2. *Modern Views of the Political Function of Old Comedy*

a.

The modern discussion of Aristophanic politics, and thus of the politics of Old Comedy generally, can reasonably be said to begin with the article by Gomme cited at the beginning of this essay.[13] Gomme's purpose was to argue against what he characterizes as the scholarly consensus of his day, represented by the work of men such as Maurice Croiset, Gilbert Murray, and William Hugill,[14] all of whom held that Aristophanes' plays were intended to dispense practical political advice of a fundamentally conservative sort. Gomme sums up the position to which he is responding as a claim that Aristophanes admired the older generation, "the men of Marathon," and their way of life, and insists that this view "will not hold water for a moment"; in fact, old men like the chorus in *Acharnians* and Philocleon in *Wasps* "are invariably on the wrong side, or *are* the wrong side" (99). The proper way to approach the problem is to recognize that Aristophanes was not a practical politician but an artist, "whose purpose is to give us a picture … not to advocate a policy" (102). Like all great art, the comedies are essentially impartial portraits of the society in which they were produced and show a fundamental sympathy for all sides: "All this is elementary … and should not need saying" (102). The historian can expect that Aristophanes' plays will offer "probable and consistent" depictions of contemporary Athenian life and social types, which is to say they will mesh with what we know about the period from other sources. But the poet's personal views are of little significance for making sense of his comedies; even if we knew precisely, for example, how Aristophanes felt about the war with Sparta and her allies in early 425, it would not affect our interpretation of *Acharnians* in any way worth mentioning.

Had Gomme been more interested in facilitating debate than suppressing it, he might have followed up his observation about the dubious character of some of Aristophanes' old men by noting that these individuals are not in general inherently wicked, but have been made to forget their own best interests. They must therefore have their minds changed

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have maintained, the result was lamentably disappointing: he succeeded in effecting not a single change" (xiii).

[13] Gomme's essay (1938) was by no means the first contribution to the question (cf. below), but represents an important scholarly watershed and is the starting point for most of the more recent discussion.

[14] Croiset (1909), G. Murray (1933), Hugill (1936).

by the hero or heroine, and they can stand (like the chorus in *Acharnians*, or Demos in *Knights*, or Philocleon in *Wasps*) for both the ancient glories of Athens and the fact that the city has recently lost its way. This would have shown that earlier critics oversimplified Aristophanes' politics, while leaving the door open for further—perhaps clearer and more careful—discussion of the issues. Instead, Gomme offers a caricature of his predecessors' (admittedly somewhat muddled) position and uses its deficiencies to justify putting an end to the debate, while relying on a petitio principii to support his own position that the political content of the plays is not worth asking after. If great works of literature cannot by definition display political or social partiality, there is little point in seeking partiality in them. But nothing other than Gomme's personal authority suggests that his original premise is correct, and arguably the most important insight of the theoretical critical work of the late twentieth century is that every representation has a point of view (or multiple points of view), that apparent objectivity is an artfully manufactured illusion, and that representations do not merely reflect the culture in which they are produced, but are part of an elaborate process by means of which cultures question and define themselves. Because we have only the texts Aristophanes produced, his personal beliefs are inaccessible to us, and to this extent Gomme is right that there is little point or profit in asking what the poet "really thought." That the plays do not press a practical political agenda may also be true, as was suggested at the end of part 1 and will be argued in more detail in part 3. They are nonetheless not neutral reflections of contemporary Athenian life but raucous interventions in what looks to have been a vigorous public debate about life in the city and indeed the Greek world as a whole. And although Gomme may be right that Aristophanes' plays *can* be read without attention to such issues, there is no reason why they *should* be read that way, at least by anyone interested in understanding Old Comedy's role in the society in which it was written and performed.

Gomme's attempt to radically "depoliticize" Aristophanic comedy by treating it as a faithful but unrevealing mirror of contemporary society must thus be judged a failure. But the advantage of the thoroughness with which he wiped the scholarly slate clean is that it allowed literary critics and historians a generation later to take up the question of the politics of Old Comedy almost afresh. This renewed discussion began in a limited and traditional fashion in the early 1970s, with a direct response to Gomme and a new attempt to identify Aristophanes' own views and intentions. In the 1990s, the pace of the debate accelerated considerably,

the theoretical background grew increasingly sophisticated and diverse, and scholarly attention came more and more to focus on the audience and the social and political "work" accomplished by the plays at the time they were produced.

b.

The first significant post-Gomme effort to take up the question of Aristophanic politics appeared in 1972 as Appendix XXIX of G.E.M. de Ste. Croix's monumental (and consistently iconoclastic) *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*.[15] De Ste. Croix's essay is intended as a pointed debunking of Gomme and a return in broad outline, but with more detailed supporting argument, to the "traditional" position Gomme rejected. De Ste. Croix argues that Aristophanes is not bitterly opposed to the radical democracy of the late fifth century in the same way the Old Oligarch is, but is nonetheless a fierce and consistent political conservative.[16] He is accordingly gentle with Sparta, never attacks the very rich, favors the aristocratic Knights, treats Cimon and Thucydides son of Melesias (two relatively conservative midcentury democratic politicians) as heroes, attacks radical democrats and their policies relentlessly, and declines to criticize Alcibiades and Nicias (the former a politically and socially prominent member of an old aristocratic family, the latter a moderate opponent of Cleon). Aristophanes' attitude toward the demos is essentially paternalistic: they deserve to be paid for rowing in the fleet and the like but ought not to be meddling so directly in politics, and the popular courts in particular are an abomination. The war, finally, is a great mess, above all else because it prevents Sparta and Athens from exercising a joint hegemony over the Greek world as they did in the early post-Persian War years. Nor are these ideas only implicit in the text, for Aristophanes wanted what he thought to be apparent to everyone who saw his comedies, and sought to exercise a direct influence over his audience's view of the city and its government. The playwright was thus exactly what he claims to be (cf. part 1c, above) but Gomme finds it difficult to believe in: a politically and socially "committed poet" (371).

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[15] De Ste. Croix (1972, 355–376). Cf. Croiset (1909) (above, n14), although his analysis is infected with the anachronistic image of party politics.

[16] For connections between ideas expressed in Aristophanes' plays and the views of the Old Oligarch, see most recently Spielvogel (2003, 3–22) (but without reference to most of the work discussed below).

As I argue in part 3 (and as most of the scholars discussed below recognize), de Ste. Croix's observations about the political ideology implicit in Aristophanes' comedies contain a substantial kernel of truth. His analysis of the intended effect of the plays nonetheless fails to explain why the poet enjoyed tremendous popular success for so many years, if his plays openly espoused a right-wing political agenda. We know that comedy was performed before a large audience almost certainly dominated by average democrats (although see part 2e, below) and that it was judged by a panel of ten male citizens randomly selected at the beginning of the festival.[17] That poets occasionally used the forum the Theater provided to convey unpopular social or political messages is possible. But that the judges—who doubtless based their rankings at least in part on the reaction of the audience as a whole—routinely awarded the prize to plays patently designed to convince the people to retreat from a direct form of democratic government and surrender power to their "betters" is difficult to believe. Such a thing might happen once or twice, because the competition that year was weak, or there were an unusually large number of political reactionaries among the judges, or the play was otherwise side-splittingly funny, or its real intentions only became obvious upon reflection. But it is almost impossible to see how a man could have made as long and successful a career as Aristophanes did out of arguing aggressively and seriously year after year against the basic political and social convictions of the vast majority of his audience. Nor is it clear why (as noted in part 1c) the comedies contain so little specific political advice, if Aristophanes' purpose with them was to exercise direct influence over his audience's opinions. That Old Comedy generally was perceived to have a didactic function may not be true; but if Aristophanes nonetheless believed that his plays ought to teach the people how to run their city and their empire, his opinions must have been either less offensive than de Ste. Croix suggests or less noticeable, and in any case his work certainly did not have the effect he intended. The crucial question is thus how the plays were received, and most recent discussion has accordingly focused on the relationship between Old Comedy and its audience and on the ideological function of the genre as a whole.

[17] For what is known of the procedure under which judges were selected, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968, 95–98).

c.

In a brief 1987 monograph, Malcolm Heath argues that Aristophanes' comedies could easily have been extremely "political," but are not.[18] Almost nothing said on the comic stage, Heath maintains, was taken seriously; Plato's decision to depict Aristophanes and Socrates drinking amiably together in his *Symposium*, for example, makes clear that the seemingly bitter personal abuse of the philosopher in *Clouds* was intended—and generally understood—to be mere good fun. Nor could the schemes for improving the world put forward in plays such as *Lysistrata* and *Acharnians* have been taken seriously by a contemporary audience; regardless of what Aristophanes from time to time pretends, no one thought of him as a political adviser. In addition, Heath argues that de Ste. Croix was wrong to detect a bias in favor of the wealthy and well born in Aristophanes' work, and attempts to show that a closer reading of the texts reveals views presumably typical of a moderately prosperous, average democrat. Aristophanic comedy (and Old Comedy generally) takes important public questions as a starting point for its wild flights of fancy. "But the product of this fantasizing process did not and was not intended to have a reciprocal effect on political reality; comedy had no designs on the political life from which it departed, and in that sense was not political" (42).

Although Heath criticizes several aspects of de Ste. Croix's analysis of Aristophanes' views, he never offers a detailed refutation of it or a full description of the democratic ideology he himself believes is implicit in the plays. Heath's insistence, moreover, that the poet merely parroted his audience's own views back to them obscures the fact that even those Athenians fully committed to the concept of popular sovereignty could not have agreed on every aspect of the question of how the city was to be governed. The plays thus inevitably reflected the opinions of some members of the audience more than those of others (on Heath's own analysis, the relatively poor); and even if Heath is right to insist that they were not intended to have a direct political effect, they must have had an indirect effect by articulating one strand of democratic thinking rather than another in an important public setting.

[18] Heath (1987). Cf. Heath (1997, 236–242), with detailed criticism of the views of J.J. Henderson (discussed below).

d.

A more fully articulated position on the relationship between Old Comedy and its audience is developed by J.J. Henderson in a series of essays, the first of which was published in 1990.[19] For Henderson, the fact that the audience in the Theater consisted not only of a large number of Athenian men of all ages and classes but also of children, slaves, resident aliens, and most likely a scattering of women made it the most complete public embodiment of the demos, of which the Assembly and juries in the law-courts were limited—and occasionally eccentric—subsets. Even more important, whereas on other, similar occasions the demos simply listened to and voted on proposals put forward by elite speakers, the opinions expressed on the comic stage were intended to be understood as those of the people themselves. The comic poets' job was to serve as the "constituent intellectuals" of the democracy by listening to what ordinary men and women were saying about the city's affairs and by expressing those views as clearly and compellingly as possible. Comedy thus enjoyed the right of bringing up for public consideration ideas and attitudes that might be judged too provocative for other settings and of speaking for groups whose ambitions and concerns might otherwise have been ignored. Although the opinions expressed on the comic stage sometimes differ from judgments rendered by other public decision-making bodies (e.g., in the case of the Assembly's election of Cleon as general shortly after *Knights* took the prize), therefore, what it has to say is at least as likely to represent the feelings of the demos generally. Because the comic poets worked by spinning imaginative tales "with a message" (Ar. *Wasps* 64) out of bits and pieces of gossip and casual talk, they led and shaped public sentiment at the same time that they reiterated it. All the same, their fundamental duty was to echo the vox populi as precisely as possible, and the man who took first place was the one whose ideas the audience could be convinced to recognize as most obviously their own. "Comedy is therefore good evidence about the attitudes of the demos (what they collectively disapproved of, what they thought laughable and mockable) and the communal problems they thought, or might be made to think, were widespread and important" (1990, 296).

Because comedy, in Henderson's view, was the means by which the thought and will of the demos were expressed most powerfully and clearly, its intellectual bedrock was an outspoken commitment to the

[19] J.J. Henderson (1990; 1993a;1995; 2003).

continued sovereignty of the people. In support of this, it promoted the solidarity of all social and economic classes, even if that meant ignoring or concealing political fault lines in the community or the fact that the people, in their various institutional incarnations, did not always behave as wisely as one might have liked. The ideological bottom line of the genre was that the demos was rightly in control of the state, and the structure of the standard comic plot—in which an average man or woman comes out on top of his or her "betters" by means of native intelligence and pluck—served to support this vision. It did so by reminding the people that ultimate authority over the state was theirs and that the political elite, despite their seeming dominance, were dependent on mass approval and support, and by insisting that the average man on the street was at least the equal of the apparently much more powerful and important individuals who ran the city's affairs on a day-to-day basis. Not only was comedy political, therefore, but it was also a fundamental democratic institution, more or less exactly as the Old Oligarch and some of the authors of the anonymous essays *On Comedy* imply (cf. part 1a–b).

J.J. Henderson allows that individual poets may occasionally have used the comic stage to attack private enemies or to take sides in well-known public feuds (1990, 313). All the same, on his reading of the evidence, the authors' personal concerns and convictions recede almost entirely into the background; the essential characteristic of comedy is that it represents the authentic voice of the Athenian people. This approach to the texts neatly explains their nominally democratic character (largely ignored by de Ste. Croix). But even a superficial reading of Aristophanes' comedies shows that not all of them confirm neatly and easily to Henderson's scheme; although *Acharnians*, for example, arguably affirms the ability of an average citizen like Dicaeopolis to outwit political insiders like Lamachus, it simultaneously dismisses the Assembly as a pack of fools incapable of making an intelligent decision, while the hero's success comes only after he cuts himself off from collective political life. Whatever litmus test it was, therefore, that determined whether a comedy was suitable for performance before an Athenian audience, an explicit affirmation of the fundamental rightness of popular rule was not obviously central to it. So, too, the overwhelming emphasis Henderson places on interpreting comedy as an expression of popular ideology and popular concerns obscures the fact that the rhetorical posture adopted in a literary work may differ from its actual agenda. Anyone who spoke in public in Athens in most of the fifth century had little choice but to present himself as a democrat, if he wished to win assent to his views and thus,

in the case of the dramatic poets, the prize and the possibility of being awarded a chorus again the following year. But that obligatory posture tells us little about the intention of the argument. Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine a clever speaker arguing in the people's name for policies whose realization would deprive them of a portion of their sovereignty. Perhaps most important, the self-conscious overlap between Henderson's view of the political function of Old Comedy and that of the Old Oligarch (e.g., 1990, 275, 278–279, 285, 291; 1993, 307–308) ought to be seen as a cause for caution rather than confidence. Although the Old Oligarch claims to understand the Athenian political system, he is patently an outsider to it and a dubious guide to its nuances (cf. part 1a). His conception of the demos as a single entity with a united will and of Old Comedy as a weapon used by the people to intimidate and control their enemies is an interesting way of thinking about how the city worked, and may shed some light on the social function of the genre. At the same time, there can be little doubt that a contemporary democratic insider would have regarded such views as at best a substantial oversimplification and perhaps as seriously distorted.

e.

A very different approach to the problem of the relationship between Old Comedy and its audience, and one designed to explain the seemingly conservative tendencies of the genre as a whole, is taken by Alan Sommerstein in a paper delivered in 1993 but published only in 1998.[20] Sommerstein's argument is essentially a working out of the consequences of two complementary initial premises. The first—which echoes a position also adopted by Heath and Henderson and represents a rejection of de Ste. Croix's insistence that comedy engaged in a vigorous effort to change its audience's mind about matters of general importance—is that the poets' principal goal was to win the prize and that in order to do so, they set their personal feelings aside and expressed what they took to be the feelings of the majority of their audience. There was accordingly very little true "free speech" in comedy, and the plays contained few political surprises.

Sommerstein's second premise is that (as de Ste. Croix argued at length, but Heath and Henderson deny) the views expressed in comedy during the Peloponnesian War years in particular have a pronounced right-wing

[20] Sommerstein (1998).

tinge. If both premises are correct, the comic audience must have been more conservative than the Athenian citizen body as a whole, and much of Sommerstein's essay is devoted to showing how this might been the case. Unlike the Assembly, Sommerstein notes, where every adult male had an automatic right to participate, or the law courts, where jurors were paid for their time and trouble, admission to the Theater cost two obols per person per day. To be present for every day of a multiday festival or to take along one's children will thus have been relatively expensive and probably beyond the means of many of the urban poor or the peasant-farmers who spent the majority of their time in the countryside and had limited access to coined money. As a result, such individuals were underrepresented in the audience, while the rich (for whom the price of admission was insignificant) dominated there.[21]

The heart of Sommerstein's thesis is thus the idea that comedy echoed the views not of the demos generally but of a distinct—and disaffected—subset of Athenian society. Sommerstein argues that evidence for a gap between the way the Assembly thought and the opinions of the audience in the Theater can be detected in an obscure decree of 440/439 that somehow restricted the rights of comic poets (cf. $\Sigma^{\text{REΓ}}$ *Acharnians* 67), and he suggests that this gap probably developed gradually over the course of the previous generation or two. At the beginning of the fifth century, the charge for admission to the Theater was most likely lower than it was later, and the composition of the audience more or less identical to the Assembly. As the city's population grew and the City Dionysia became an important international event, demand for seats began to exceed supply, and the Assembly dealt with the problem by raising the admission fee, so that attendance became more difficult for the poor.[22] The unanticipated consequence of this seemingly straightforward attempt to ration social goods was that by Aristophanes' time the Theater was a hotbed of right-wing political and social thought.

Sommerstein's thesis accounts for the conservative character of much of what is said (or hinted at) about politics in Aristophanic comedy in a way that Henderson's does not. But if anything the Old Oligarch says can be regarded as reliable, it is certainly his insistence that comedy was

[21] Metics, who will generally have participated in the urban cash economy, will also have been overrepresented in the Theater, and although they could not serve as judges, they could still influence the decisions either indirectly (by laughing and applauding for the plays they liked) or directly (by lobbying the judges, whose identities were known).

[22] It is not clear how Sommerstein's thesis is to be applied to the Lenaea, which was celebrated in midwinter and can thus have suffered from no such pressures.

the intellectual and social property of the demos rather than the rich (part 1a). And if a wide political and social gap really existed between the Assembly and the Theater, it is striking that (as Henderson points out) Aristophanic heroes are always average people and that, although the plays regularly present the demos as benighted, they never suggest that it is fundamentally depraved and bad, as the Old Oligarch would have it. Although Aristophanes' comedies have some unmistakably conservative tendencies, therefore, they also carefully preserve populist appearances, a fact that suggests an eye toward a primary intended audience of average ("radical") democrats. Nor are the specific historical arguments Sommerstein puts forward compelling. We know next to nothing about the political orientation of comedy before the 430s (cf. part 3), and—despite Sommerstein's insistence to the contrary—the views that may (or may not) have been expressed in some early Aeschylean tragedies have no potential to shed light on the question.[23] It is thus impossible to say whether the genre grew more conservative over the course of the fifth century. That we have no idea how much was charged for admission to the Theater in the first half of the century means that there is also little point in speculating as to how or when the price changed, or what the effect of an (entirely hypothetical) rise in the cost of attending performances may have been. Even if there was a shortage of seats (and nothing else we know suggests this), it is also difficult to accept Sommerstein's suggestion that the Assembly dealt with the matter in a way that discriminated against average members of the demos or to believe that, if it did produce such discrimination accidentally, it would not have corrected the error as soon as the politically disastrous consequences of the policy became apparent. And regardless of how much admission cost—and two obols (perhaps one-third of an average workman's daily wage) is not necessarily quite as large a sum as Sommerstein makes it out to be, at least for admission to major cultural events that occurred only once a year—by Aristophanes' time the Theater of Dionysus had a capacity of between fifteen thousand and twenty thousand people, which is far too many to have been a particularly exclusive audience. As for the decree of 440/439, finally, its terms and purposes are alike obscure, and the most significant thing that can be said about it is probably that it was repealed three years later.[24] But the one point that the existence of such a decree

[23] Sommerstein (1998, 52).

[24] For the various restrictions allegedly placed on the comic poets in the second half of the fifth century, see Halliwell (1991a).

does make clear is that the Assembly was sovereign over the Theater, as it was over the entire city generally. If the Theater had become a focus of vocal antidemocratic sentiment, as Sommerstein believes, it would certainly have been permanently suppressed; since it was not, his analysis of the evidence must be called into question. Although comedy does not unambiguously represent the voice of the demos (as Henderson would have it), neither does it obviously represent the voice of the demos' enemies.

f.

According to Josiah Ober, Athens' democracy in the classical period created and maintained a set of interlocking, widely accepted verities, which might be called a "regime of truth."[25] Like the traditional elite in most Greek cities, the Athenian elite were well educated and thus (in strictly technical terms) well equipped to express their political and social views in writing. Unlike other such elites, however, they were almost continually out of power during the late fifth and fourth centuries, and the system of "knowledge" constructed by the democracy was so coercive and so well adapted to turning discourse of every sort to its own ends that it was difficult for them to find a genre or vocabulary to express their discontent. Over the course of several generations, a small number of disaffected aristocrats created a sort of "virtual community" in which they competed to discover the most compelling way to articulate their convictions about the "problem of democracy." Some of these men (including the Old Oligarch and Plato) wished to see the democratic system overthrown and can be termed "rejectionist" critics; others (including Aristophanes) tried to call their fellow citizens back to their traditional ideals and can be termed "reformers" or "immanent critics." But whatever the differences among them, these men shared a sense that there was something wrong with the democratic status quo and a need to communicate their analysis of the problem to others.

Comedy as a genre, Ober argues, is "consistently critical of the social and political status quo," a fact that "strongly suggests that the Athenians intended for the comic poet to help educate the citizenry by serving as a social and political critic" (125). The poet was granted "an extreme

[25] Ober (1998). Ober's discussion of Aristophanes (122–155) is primarily concerned with *Ecclesiazusae*.

form of the citizen's right of free speech" (125) and was expected to use it to expose things otherwise kept hidden or ignored. Above all else, his job was "to reveal the inner workings of democratic knowledge itself" and to lay bare "contradictions within and between the array of mythic constructions that underpinned the Athenian 'regime of truth'" (125) in order to correct the people's tendency to self-deception. More simply put, the playwright's duty was to jolt the demos into the realization that the world was not always what democratic ideology made it out to be. Comedy thus represented an institutionalized means for the Athenian people to confront problems in the intellectual structure of their state, and whatever Aristophanes' personal views, he was "in effect hired to educate the citizenry" (126).

The most striking characteristic of Ober's analysis of the political function of Old Comedy is that, beneath a patina of late twentieth-century academic language, it represents little more than a reiteration of the chorus' assertions in *Acharnians*: the poet functions as an instructor of the demos by alerting the people to the fact that the world is not what other public discourse makes it seem. As was argued at length in part 1c, these remarks cannot be treated as straightforward evidence for comedy's role, particularly since nothing said onstage ever exercised a discernable influence on public policy. Nor does the fact that the comic poets are consistently critical of the social and political status quo justify Ober's conclusion that the Athenians intended them to serve as educators of the populace. Instead, this once again begs the question by adopting Aristophanes' own analysis, and Ober fails to show what his thesis (and Aristophanes') manifestly requires, viz. that the ideas put forward in comedy would have been received as striking revelations by the man in the street. It may be that no one ever stood up in the Assembly and (for example) denounced Cleon as a corrupt, cowardly pervert and the people as fools for accepting his version of democracy (cf. *Acharnians* 656–664). There is nonetheless no reason to believe that such a vision of things never occurred to any average democrat before Aristophanes articulated it onstage; indeed, as Henderson (part 2c) argues at length, at least some of what is said in comedy about the deficiencies of the contemporary state and its leadership sounds suspiciously like a distillation of quotidian political grumbling.

g.

In an exceedingly long article, David Rosenbloom argues that during the post-Periclean Peloponnesian War years, the comic poets were key players in a struggle between two Athenian social and economic elites.[26] Men like Cleon and Hyperbolus, who were wealthy but did not belong to the city's traditional leadership class, had pioneered a political style in which power was accumulated and wielded via the use of public rather than personal funds. Although these men offered the people the illusion of power and pleasure, Aristophanes and the other poets argued, their real goal was to reduce them to a condition not easily distinguished from slavery. Comedy therefore engaged in a consistent, aggressive effort to discredit the social bases on which the new type of politician gathered and exercised power, and as a genre it put forward what Rosenbloom characterizes as the "non-negotiable demand" (289) that the current demagogues be replaced by old-style aristocrats. These new leaders would practice a traditional "politics of largesse" (313–314) by using their own money rather than state revenues to benefit the people; would break the lock on power currently held by the "urban peasantry" and their leaders, inter alia by eliminating paid jury service; and would create a new alliance of "good, moderate citizens." Comedy's analysis of the city's problems and the steps that would be necessary to correct them were thus strikingly similar to views expressed by men like the Old Oligarch. Indeed, Rosenbloom argues that the resemblance is not accidental; the oligarchs who seized power in Athens in 411 and again in 404 were merely following a script for a revolution in favor of which the comic poets had been agitating for years.

Rosenbloom effectively articulates a number of important elements in the Old Comic vision of the bad democratic leader, who fills his own pockets while convincing the people that he is protecting and serving only them. But the "politics of largesse," which Rosenbloom argues is central to the comic poets' alternative vision, is nowhere apparent in the plays themselves; and Aristophanes, at least, repeatedly insists that the fundamental problem with the contemporary state is that public funds are being wasted by the demagogues and ought to be better—that is, more widely—distributed (see part 3). More important, Rosenbloom, like Ober (see part 2 f) accepts at face value comedy's unlikely claim to have a straightforward didactic purpose, while simultaneously imagin-

[26] Rosenbloom (2002).

ing that the poets engaged in a decades-long right-wing harangue of democratic audiences (presumably dominated by the "urban peasantry") with no negative consequences for their professional standing or their art. Why any individual playwright would have behaved so recklessly is difficult enough to see, since articulating positions of this sort would almost inevitably have cost him the prize. But even if one or two poets did write plays of the sort Rosenbloom suggests (perhaps because they or their friends or backers were from the city's traditional social elite), other men would inevitably have courted popular favor by moving toward the perceived political center in the sort of process Henderson's articles (discussed in part 2d) describe. Nor does the fact that many of the faults Aristophanes detects in Athens' system of government were also recognized by the Old Oligarch and his ideological kin suggest that the comic poets were simply speaking for the oligarchs. More likely, the problems were obvious and were discussed by friends and foes of the democracy alike. Although Rosenbloom helpfully discusses some crucial elements of the critique of the city's leadership offered by Aristophanes and some of his contemporaries, therefore, it is impossible to believe his claim that the audience in the Theater of Dionysus was subjected to—and willing to applaud!—bitter right-wing invective, the clear and stated purpose of which was to bring about fundamental, antidemocratic changes in the system.

That at least some Athenian Old Comedy was distinctly "political" in orientation has been argued since antiquity (part 1). But as the objections raised to the modern theories discussed above make clear, it is difficult to discover precisely whose views the genre articulated and to what end. An effective analysis of the question must account simultaneously for comedy's appeal to a broad popular audience and for the scathing criticism Aristophanes' plays in particular direct against the contemporary democratic government. It must also explain why, despite the overt political content of many of the plays and the poet's own claim that his purpose is to educate the citizenry, the genre had so little obvious impact on day-to-day life in the city.

3. *Politics in Old Comedy*

We know almost nothing about the historical origins of Old Comedy and (despite the survival of some fragments and a few scattered comments in later sources) very little about what went in any individual play before the

late 430s. Nothing we know, however, suggests that comedy was defined from the first by an aggressive engagement with and criticism of the city's system of government, or even that explicit discussion of political matters was a mandatory feature of the genre in Aristophanes' time. On the evidence of the surviving titles and fragments, the plays of the Sicilian comic poet Epicharmus (fl. 490s–470s?) had no explicit political content, while the occasional references to Megarian comedy in Aristophanes (*Wasps* 57 with MacDowell [1971] ad loc.; cf. *Acharnians* 738–741) and elsewhere (Ecphantid. fr. 3; Eup. fr. 261; Arist. *Poetics* 1448a31–32; cf. Myrtil. fr. 1) imply that the genre consisted of little more than crude slapstick. Aristotle (supported—or perhaps merely followed—by some of the anonymous essayists *On Comedy*) insists that in Attica, comedy had an invective ("iambic") character from the very beginning (*Poetics* 1449b7–8), which is to say that it played a role in establishing and enforcing community behavioral norms (cf. part 1b). But nothing suggests either that early comic abuse poetry served specifically to exercise democratic control over citizens inclined to favor an aristocratic form of government, or that broader questions about how the city ought to be governed were taken up or even touched upon by it; even the targets of the iambic abuse songs found in some Aristophanic comedies (*Acharnians* 836–859; *Frogs* 416–430; cf. Eup. frr. 99.1–22; 386), after all, are not exclusively politicians. The sole surviving fragment of Susarion, the alleged inventor of Athenian Old Comedy (e.g., Marm. Par. *FGrH* 239 A 39; anon. *de Comoedia* III.1), is a lament about the impossibility of living either with or without women and is in any case almost certainly apocryphal, while the titles and fragments of the plays of Chionides and Ecphantides do not suggest a systematic concern with how the state is managed. Were we better informed about these playwrights, we might recognize more explicit political content in their work; an ancient commentator on Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* (430 BCE?), for example, informs us that Pericles was denounced in the play "via innuendo" for bringing the Peloponnesian War on the Athenians (*Dionysalex. test.* i.44–48), something we would never have guessed had we only the title and a few scraps of the text, as we do of most early comedies about which we know anything at all. But even this may be only a Hellenistic scholar's fantasy, and even if it is not, there is no positive reason to read the scanty remains of the plays from the first half of the fifth century in a similar fashion.

The earliest evidence for explicitly political comedy is perhaps to be found in the work of Crates (first victorious ca. 450), who Aristotle says began the movement away from simple abuse of individuals toward

plots of a more general character (*Poetics* 1449b7–8), and whose titles include *Orators* and *Samians*, the latter possibly to be connected with the island's unsuccessful revolt from the Athenian Empire in 440. Some of the later comedies of Cratinus (fl. ca. 450–420) certainly took up specifically political themes; in addition to *Dionysalexandros* (above), for example, *Cheirons* (430s?) featured the return of the early sixth-century lawgiver Solon from the dead (cf. Cratin. fr. 246)—presumably to denounce the deficiency of the contemporary city—as well as a song abusing Pericles and Aspasia (Cratin. frr. 258–259). Aristophanes' work is full of broad political commentary of all sorts, but the controversy that allegedly surrounded *Babylonians* suggests that the political content of the play was unlike what was normally seen on the comic stage in the early 420s (cf. part 1c). According to Platonius (*de Comoedia* II.11–12), Eupolis was even more explicit in his treatment of political issues, in that he discussed particular laws that ought to be established or abolished not just in his parabases but in other parts of his plays as well, although whether these were serious proposals for reform or silly suggestions—like the chorus' insistence at *Acharnians* 713–718 that in the future trials ought to be conducted by age class—is impossible to say. The first comedy directed against an individual political figure by name seems to have been Plato Comicus' *Hyperbolus* (early 410s), and plays of this type flourished briefly for a decade or so.[27]

On the most straightforward reading of the evidence, therefore, Old Comedy only became "political" in the second half (and especially the final quarter) of the fifth century, with Cratinus, Aristophanes, and Eupolis leading the way, and by the end of the century, the fashion had faded.[28] Nor was all comedy political even in this period; Cratinus' *Odysseuses*, for example, is said by Platonius (*de Comoedia* I.29–31, 49–52) to have consisted of simple parody of Homer, while Aristophanes' *Clouds*, although arguably concerned with public morals broadly defined, has next to nothing to say about the city's democratic government and the choices it ought or ought not to make. When at the beginning of Aristophanes' *Wasps*,

[27] Sommerstein (2000).

[28] Although the disappearance of explicitly political material has traditionally been regarded as one mark of the transition to "Middle Comedy," therefore, it might be better to think of political Old Comedy as an aberration that lasted only a generation of so, after which the genre returned to more traditional material. For an attempt to show that some Middle Comedy retained a political focus, see Nesselrath (1997, 272–277). For an attempt to locate political argument somewhat more broadly defined in Menander's plays, see Lape (2004).

therefore, Xanthias lists the sorts of plays the spectators in the Theater might reasonably expect to see on this occasion, he mentions not only a fresh denunciation of Cleon (i.e., another comedy like *Knights*) but also Megarian-style slapstick, mythological parody, and an attack on Euripides (*Wasps* 57–63).

Overtly political comedy of the sort found in many Aristophanic plays is thus most likely only one type of Old Comedy, and that in turn suggests that to understand its significance we might do well to consider the genre's overall attitude toward the world and the reaction it demands from its audience. Comedy was clearly intended to be entertaining, and it is difficult to believe that any play took the prize if it was not, or that any playwright easily got a second chorus if his first drama was tediously didactic. Regardless of whether audiences attended the Theater in the hope of receiving political instruction, therefore, they were also and more fundamentally expecting to be made to laugh. Analyses that treat the dramatic festivals primarily as vehicles for political education and indoctrination thus obscure an essential point; even if Old Comedy was (at least on occasion) "serious" in its treatment of matters of public significance, that was only part of its mission. Nor does offering useful answers to practical problems appear to have been central to the intellectual and social mission of the genre. Old Comic plots routinely begin with some important—and not particularly obscure—contemporary problem or contradiction: the Peloponnesian War had produced untold human suffering for little obvious gain and appeared to be dragging on endlessly; the Assembly routinely made what could be seen in retrospect to have been very bad decisions; Homer's stories were famous but sometimes ridiculous; Aeschylus' plays were revered as classics but, to the average reader or theatergoer, not infrequently appeared verbose, boring, and incoherent; Euripides' work was constantly on display at the festivals, despite the shocking things his characters said and did; women were to be found in every house, although common wisdom insisted that they could not be trusted anywhere; no one ever had enough really good things to eat; poverty existed side by side with wealth, with apparent disregard for justice; and the gods' supposed oversight of the world was patently deficient. It is easy to see (in general terms) what ought to be done about all these problems: the war should be brought to an end immediately, preferably on highly favorable terms; either the Assembly should be made to see sense or one ought to give up participating in it and make the most of the personal advantages likely to result; Homer, Aeschylus, and Euripides should all be exposed for the bores and villains they really are; women

should either be forced to use their acknowledged abilities at cheating, lying, and the like to benefit men or be gotten rid of entirely; dainties should be made to appear and force their way into men's mouths; wealth ought to be distributed to those who deserve it and taken away from those who do not, although alternatively everyone might simply be made rich; and the gods should be called to account for their lack of diligence and, if necessary, deposed. These are precisely the sorts of things the heroes and heroines of Old Comedy accomplish. But the fact that nothing like this can be done in the real world means that it is difficult to see what practical lesson one could take away from watching it happen onstage.

Although Athenian Old Comedy is distinguished by a substantial degree of intellectual clarity, therefore, that clarity is a consequence of its lack of social efficacy, for its plots routinely turn on an implicit acknowledgement that the world cannot be changed by anyone less lucky, clever, and aggressive than its heroes. The fact that such fantasies were staged so often in the late fifth century nonetheless shows that contemporary audiences found them appealing, and that observation leads directly to the question of the nature of Aristophanic politics and thus of Old Comic politics generally. As de Ste. Croix in particular points out (part 2b), what survives of Aristophanes' work does not contain a jumble of random opinions, as if the poet cobbled together an entirely new argument for every festival. In what follows, I concentrate on the attitudes expressed in the plays toward internal matters and especially the nature and failings of the democratic government, and I argue that this aspect of Aristophanes' dramas helps make sense of the political stance of Old Comedy as a genre.

As Heath and Henderson (part 2c–d) in particular argue (although without making the case in detail), all the surviving Aristophanic comedies that touch on politics are self-consciously and outspokenly "democratic." The poet and his characters regularly insist that they are loyal Athenians who want what is best for the people and have no sympathy for the city's enemies and no interest in establishing a more limited form of government (e.g., *Acharnians* 509–512; *Wasps* 488–509; *Birds* 123–126, 812–816). Although arguably reactionary opinions do emerge occasionally in the text (see below), therefore, the plays simultaneously and emphatically insist that all revenues and benefits that accrue to the Athenian state belong to the demos and the demos alone (esp. *Wasps* 656–679). On occasion, the poet or his characters express limited sympathy or disgust for the way in which the allied states are administered—or misadministered (e.g., *Acharnians* 642; *Birds* 1422–1469). But no apology is offered for the existence of the empire itself; the Athenian

people earned control of it by their valor in the Persian Wars, and especially the Battle of Marathon, and by their hard fighting generally, and they have a right to enjoy whatever goods it produces (e.g., *Knights* 779–787, 1333–1334; *Wasps* 678–679, 700–701, 706–711, 1097–1101, 1117–1122). Indeed, one of the best things that can be said about a man is that his actions guarantee that the subject allies' tribute payments will be made on time and willingly (*Acharnians* 643–645). Bad politicians, on the other hand, routinely take bribes from representatives of other states, obviously in order to help them evade their obligations to the Athenian people (e.g., *Knights* 832–835, 840; *Wasps* 669–677).[29]

Aristophanic comedy is thus firmly "democratic" in the sense that it insists that it is concerned with the good of the demos.[30] All the same, the plays do not argue that the people ought to manage their collective affairs directly. In part, this is because governing a city on a day-to-day basis is, allegedly, extremely tedious work, which no one should have to do if someone else will do it for him (esp. *Ecclesiazusae* 460–464). Whenever they can, therefore, the poet's heroes escape the drudgery of quotidian urban political existence, by opting for a private life in the countryside (*Knights*, *Peace*) or absolute control over a perfect, preurban world (*Birds*), or by remaining in Athens but severing themselves from collective life (*Acharnians*, *Wasps*), or by finding someone else to carry out their duties (*Ecclesiazusae*). Even as matters are, moreover, the comedies consistently conceive of democracy as an arrangement under which the people themselves do little or no work and are instead cared for by men who try to earn their favor. Several models are used to explain this relationship: the state is a household in which slaves (= politicians) compete to do their master (= the demos) service, by giving him whatever they can and—ideally—holding nothing back for themselves (*Knights* pas-

[29] For the allies' alleged eagerness to avoid making their tribute payments, see *Peace* 619–621 (supposedly an important cause of the Peloponnesian War). For other unapologetic references to the empire, see *Peace* 169–172; *Lysistrata* 582–584, with J.J. Henderson on 1177–1181. An ideal of Panhellenic unity against the threat of Persian power is invoked only as a verbal fig leaf to justify support for a joint Athenian-Spartan hegemony over the rest of the Greek world (*Peace* 1082, with S.D. Olson [1998] on 105–106; *Lysistrata* 1128–1134). Elsewhere, Persia is treated not as an active military or political threat but as a marginal power, significant as a traditional enemy (*Thesmophoriazusae* 365) and because of its wealth (*Wealth* 170) and the possibility that it might someday interfere in Greek affairs (*Acharnians* 61–122, 647–651; *Knights* 478), but of no immediate concern.

[30] Cf. *Clouds* 205, where Strepsiades, having been informed that a scientific instrument he sees in the Think Tank is used for measuring land (and thus, as he imagines, for allotting cleruchies), responds by calling the device δημοτικός.

sim, esp. 1107–1119, 1211–1216; cf. *Wasps* passim); or politicians are rival lovers who attempt to outdo one another in offering gifts to their beloved (= the demos) (*Knights* 732–740, 1162–1163); or they are dogs who (at least if they deserve a place inside the house by the fire) guard their master and fight on his behalf (e.g., *Knights* 1037–1043; *Wasps* 891–994, esp. 952–972). But in every case the force of the model is the same: democracy in both practice and theory is not so much direct rule by the demos as an arrangement under which the demos' affairs are conducted for it by protectors and guides whom the people choose and supervise.

Nor is this system of government a bad thing, for to the extent that the people do control their own affairs, they regularly prove themselves incapable of acting wisely. Their most basic failing is a readiness to confuse short-term profit with long-term benefit, as each man places his own self-interest before the good of the state as a whole (e.g., *Acharnians* 19–27; *Ecclesiazusae* 183–188, 197–198, 205–208) and allows himself to be bought off with cheap bribes and petty flattery (e.g., *Knights* 1340–1363; *Wasps* 684, 695). Even more disastrous for the commonwealth is the demos' collective failure either to choose good leaders or to remove bad ones once their faults have been exposed. Indeed, the people display a perverse tendency to pick the worst possible leaders, so that the uglier, greedier, baser, and more ignorant a man, the better chance he has of becoming a demagogue (e.g., *Knights* 180–193, 217–219, 324–325; *Ecclesiazusae* 176–179). The predictable result is that the orators who control the Assembly and the lawcourts use lies, threats, intimidation, bribes, and an iron grip on the city's purse strings to run matters as they wish—which is to say, in a way that is never to the people's advantage, even when it seems to be (e.g., *Knights* 48–70; *Wasps* 682–712; *Peace* 632–648). The city's leaders insist—as all democratic politicians must—that they are devoted to the public good (e.g., *Knights* 46–52, 1340–1344; *Wasps* 666–667). But the fact of the matter is that what really interests them is stealing state revenues, paying themselves and their associates inflated salaries, and extracting bribes from every possible source (e.g., *Acharnians* 595–619; *Knights* 280–283, 823–827, 1030–1034; *Clouds* 351–352; *Wasps* 675–657, 691–694; *Wealth* 665–666); the people themselves get only the smallest share of the city's revenues, and then only if they keep quiet and behave themselves (esp. *Wasps* 684–705). When domestic or international trouble does not exist, politicians stir it up, for confusing the situation and convincing the demos that it is in danger is their basic means of maintaining a grip on power and punishing their enemies (e.g.,

Knights 864–867; *Peace* 606–609). The war with Sparta, for example, is several times said to have begun because it served Pericles' private interests (*Acharnians* 524–534; *Peace* 606–611, cf. 622–625), and it continues because political insiders find that the fighting works to their advantage (e.g., *Knights* 801–804; *Peace* 632–648; *Lysistrata* 489–491); were the good of the Athenian people really to the fore, an armistice would be concluded immediately (e.g., *Knights* 1388–1393). The demos is thus being robbed blind by its leaders, and the worst part is that the people are convinced that they are in control of the state and are managing it so as to bring the maximum benefit to themselves, and seem unable to recognize the truth even when it stares them in the face (e.g., *Acharnians* 370–374, 634–640; *Knights* 1339–1353; *Wasps* 515–517).[31]

Oddly enough, therefore, Aristophanic comedy demonstrates its democratic bona fides by arguing that contemporary Athens is not really run by the demos at all (e.g., *Knights* 714–720; *Wasps* 703–705) and—perhaps even more surprising, at least to us today—by insisting that this is not in principle a bad thing. Henderson (part 2d) argues that the fundamental political function of Old Comedy was to remind the people that the ultimate power in the state was theirs rather than their leaders', an analysis that would seem to require that the implicit message of the plays be that the demos could put a stop to all this alleged malfeasance and deceit by seizing direct control of the city's affairs. Aristophanes' plays, however, not only fail to make this point but rely throughout on a fundamentally different vision of democracy, as government for the people but inevitably—and quite properly—not by the people. The interests of the demos must be protected. But the fact of the matter is that "radical" democracy is a great fraud, that the rhetoric that accompanies it has blinded the people to the fact that they have been systematically taken in by their supposed guides and protectors, and that the demos is incapable of looking out for its own best interests and ought not to waste its time trying to do so in the first place. This is a city of sheep (esp. *Wasps* 31–33), and what is wanted is a good sheepdog (*Wasps* 950–955), who will protect the people not just from their enemies but also from themselves, and who will thus make them happier than they would otherwise have been. Simply put, "democracy" has the potential to work only when it is run in a less than democratic manner, a point the Old Oligarch also makes in a more overtly hostile fashion (i.3).

[31] For a detailed reading of *Wasps* along these lines, see S.D. Olson (1996).

The overwhelmingly negative attitude toward the contemporary democratic state apparent in Aristophanes' plays has generally been explained—when it has been acknowledged—as an expression of the poet's own political and social views (esp. part 2b, g): he disliked Cleon and everything for which Cleon stood, and was happy to insist that the city's affairs had been better managed in the days of Cimon and Thucydides son of Melesias (which he himself, of course, had not known, except perhaps as a very young child). But regardless of whether this is right, what matters more is that none of the above can have much to do with the social and political function of Aristophanes' plays, which were successfully performed before large audiences dominated by average democrats, many of whom voted for Cleon and his proposals on a regular basis. Nor do the plays make any effort to call for systematic change, but imply instead that the current situation cannot be corrected, for if a genuinely good man does unexpectedly offer himself for public service, the people will turn on him in the same way that Philocleon turns on the good dog Labes/Laches in *Wasps*. Indeed, villainy is a basic qualification for the job of demagogue as the Athenian people have come to conceive it, and is a considerable advantage in carrying out the responsibilities of the position; in *Knights* the only person capable of replacing Cleon is therefore the even more repulsive Sausage-Seller, although he turns out paradoxically to be the demos' savior. Perhaps more important, political office is inherently corrupting (*Ecclesiazusae* 176–179; *Wealth* 567–570), making the succession of demagogues an inevitable downward spiral (esp. *Knights* 128–144). And despite scattered claims (inserted as none-too-subtle attempts at flattery) that the demos knows exactly what it is doing (esp. *Knights* 1121–1150), the plays far more consistently insist that, collectively at least, the people are fools, particularly when they take up explicitly political matters (esp. *Knights* 746–755). The audience is therefore said again and again to consist of idiots, villains, and worse (e.g., *Clouds* 1096–1103; *Peace* 821–823; *Frogs* 274–276; *Ecclesiazusae* 434–440).

Regardless of the political opinions that Aristophanes' plays incidentally express, therefore, they contain no obvious positive "teaching." Instead, the comedies propose to solve the complex of problems they identify by means of an escape into fantasy: the hero's goal is to evade political commitment rather than embrace it, and his success is measured by the extent to which he is able to do so and thus become utterly, blissfully happy. Were the plays themselves not so resolutely "political," this might be explained as simple cynicism: politics is bullshit, and the less one has

to do with it, the better. A more satisfying explanation would seem to be that the reason for the consistently favorable reception of Aristophanes' plays by a democratic audience is precisely their lack of a practical political program, combined with their despairing attitude toward the people's ability to govern themselves. Most Athenian men in the late fifth and early fourth century had extensive experience in the day-to-day business of running the city. The vast majority of them had served on juries in the law courts, and many had sued other people or been sued themselves; thousands at a time attended the Assembly, listened to the debates there and sometimes even spoke, and voted on practical matters of every sort; at least once in their life, most of them were chosen by lot to serve on the city's Council (as Aristophanes himself eventually was); many held allotted or elective office; and virtually all served again and again as hoplites or rowers in the fleet. As a result, they knew just how difficult it was to make prescient political decisions, to manage the city's affairs effectively and efficiently, and to keep expenses and ambition in line with income. Most of them were fairly intelligent but not brilliant, and the great majority had little or no formal education; all the same, they guarded their autonomy closely and ran their state as best they could. For the most part, they did an exceedingly good job of this, and Athens' political system was flexible enough to allow for attempts to correct its own mistakes and to punish those who abused their power or ignored their duties. But despite the people's best communal and individual efforts, the city's affairs rarely proceeded precisely as intended; something inevitably went awry in even the best-laid plans, and whatever went right brought unexpected and often unwelcome consequences.

The average citizen in the Theater on festival days may have been willing to imagine that public affairs had run more smoothly in his youth or in his father's day, and the occasional expression of similar opinions in Aristophanes' plays did not offend him. A certain percentage of the audience was also probably just as appalled at Cleon's behavior and what it seemed to represent as Aristophanes at least pretends to be. But even for such relatively disaffected citizens, a willingness to hear the contemporary state of affairs criticized does not imply a lack of confidence in the concept of democracy or a desire for wholesale political change. What most attracted the audience to Aristophanes' plays must instead have been their aggressive insistence that, appearances aside, none of the city's current troubles are the people's fault, except for the fact that the people are—collectively, if not individually—fools. Whatever is wrong is the fault of "insiders" (whoever they may be) and of leaders

who claim—and appear—to be working for the common good, but who are in fact engaged in a conspiracy to keep the demos down. The fact that everyone else is a fool means that nothing can be done about the situation, although every man is free to imagine that he personally (like a good comic hero) sees through the situation, even if (unlike a comic hero) he is powerless to change it.

Aristophanic comedy thus ultimately relies on what the poet and the Old Oligarch both insist was a fundamental tendency of the Athenian democracy: the willingness of the people to excuse themselves individually from responsibility for any communal actions or decisions that turned out badly (*Ecclesiazusae* 193–196, 823–829; [X.] *Ath.* ii.17). Nor does any of this require despair, for the plays also affirm that, no matter how foolishly the people act, the gods keep a benevolent eye out for their interests (*Clouds* 587–589; *Ecclesiazusae* 473–475; cf. S.D. Olson [1998] xlix–l on fr. 308). And comic heroes, at least, always manage to turn even the most unhappy situation to their own advantage, which leaves one tiny but important window of opportunity open.

If Aristophanes' account in *Acharnians* of the conflict over *Babylonians* is true (cf. part 1c), therefore, it is easy to see both why the Council refused to take any action against him and why Cleon loathed the play: as a good "watchdog of the demos," he dealt with the nitty-gritty of the people's affairs on something like a full-time basis and was well aware that the problems Athens faced had little or nothing to do with his own alleged corruption or that of the city's other leaders. The political case *Babylonians* made was not only offensive to him personally but utterly irresponsible—as might be expected of political satire written by someone barely twenty years old who had no practical political experience whatsoever and no clear or coherent policy aims. And regardless of what one makes of the very earliest phase of Aristophanes' career, it must have been precisely that utter lack of political responsibility and sobriety that won both *Acharnians* and *Knights* the prize. What Aristophanes' plays (and presumably those of his contemporaries) told the audience was that, both individually and collectively, they were not responsible for the ugly state of common affairs. They were thus free to laugh at—or perhaps even to shake their head in disapproval of—the way matters were. But they were not required to do anything about them, and that was a prospect that—at least for a festival day or two in the Theater—pleased them immensely.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE

J. Richard Green

Research on ancient theatre over recent decades has growingly emphasised the point that, whatever their mode of transmission to the present day, our preserved texts were designed as plays for performance rather than as pieces of literature, and this emphasis on performance has prompted more thorough investigation of the other (i.e., non-literary) major body of evidence: the material remains. Apart from the theatre structures themselves, which continue to be excavated and re-examined, we have a broad range of objects including vases decorated with what are in some sense souvenirs of performances: figurines in terracotta, bronze, ivory and even silver; reproductions of masks in clay, marble, bronze and glass; marble reliefs recording performances with inscriptions and/or depictions of masks and actors; paintings and mosaics of masks and scenes; and a host of minor objects. Properly classified and interpreted, they have a great deal to tell us about the sorts of plays that were performed and what they looked like on stage, in a way that we could never learn from the literary sources. They also reveal a lot about the reception of theatre, its popularity and its perceived role among the public at large in a way that forms a valuable complement to the literary evidence that, after all, was created by and for an educated elite. Although much work still remains to be done, this chapter will attempt to sketch out how this evidence may be used on the basis of a few select examples.

For early comedy, the material remains form our most valuable, indeed almost our only source of evidence. From Athens in the period between about 550 and 480 BC, we have a series of some twenty-one vases decorated with what must certainly be interpreted as comic choruses.[1] There is typically (but not always, depending on space) a piper

[1] For an overview, see J.R. Green (1985a). There are now a few more to be added.



Fig. 1. Small Athenian black-figure amphora. Brooklyn 09.35, said to be from Thebes. After J.R. Green (1985a)

associated with a group of men dressed up, a group wearing identical costume but for very minor variations, a group that dances with the same step. One example, on a small amphora in Brooklyn of towards 490 BC, has two pairs of helmetted men with long hair moving right and holding up their colourful, highly decorated himatia, as if showing them



Fig. 2. Athenian black-figure lekythos. Palermo CAT 2816, from Selinus. Attributed to the Athena Painter. After Kustermann Graf (2002)

off (fig. 1).[2] They are clearly special, dressed in a way that one does not normally find. The same figures appear on an oinochoe in Würzburg, an olpe in Nicosia and a skyphos in Pulsano near Taranto.[3]

Another set found in multiple copies is a chorus of dolphin-riders. They were created just slightly later than the Brooklyn amphora, and differ from a version of some twenty years earlier.[4] There are six depictions preserved: two lekythoi, three cups and a skyphos.[5] The riders are bearded and wear corselets, helmets and cloaks; each rider carries two spears. One example, from Selinus, is illustrated in fig. 2.[6] It is interesting that in this case the drawing is not totally literal and one may speculate on how the costume worked in practice: the legs alongside the dolphin must

[2] Brooklyn 09.35, said to be from Thebes, J.R. Green (1985a) 101 no. 9, fig. 12a–b. The other side has two similar figures.

[3] Würzburg L. 344, oinochoe, J.R. Green (1985a) 101 no. 10, fig. 13; Nicosia C 428, from Marion, olpe, Beazley (1989) 30–31, no. VIII, pl. 8, 3; Pulsano, from between Pulsano and Lizzano, skyphos, Fedele et al. (1984) 45–46, no. 14, pl. 43.

[4] The earlier version on a psykter decorated by Oltos: New York 1989.281.69, J.R. Green (1985a) 101 no. 6, fig. 9.

[5] See Green, J.R. (1985a) 102 ff., nos. 13–17; and add Hamma (1989) 42–43, no. 22, ill.

[6] Palermo CAT 2816, Kustermann Graf (2002) 244–246, t. 207, with 402, pl. 102.

have been artificial while the performer's real legs came down through the animal to stand on the ground.[7]

It nonetheless says something for their powers of observation that different vase-painters came up with results that look so much the same. Indeed, the care given to the portrayal of costume and action gives some hint of the impact of the performance visually, in the theatre. The vase-painters were decorating pots to make a living, and to sell them it seems clear that their purchasers must have demanded something that distinguished a given performance from others like it and gave a clear sense of the vividness and complexity of the presentation. This in turn points to the importance of the visual aspect of the performance as put on in the theatre in addition to the song, the dance and the story enacted.

In all preserved cases, the story or the character of the chorus involves the strange or exotic. The knights or cavalry on the amphora in Berlin wear strange helmets. They are foreigners. Dolphin-riders were the subject of at least two plays. Other scenes show strangely-dressed men, warriors on stilts, river-gods, Amazon-like figures carrying swords and severed heads, and at least two versions of roosters. All of them are distinctly non-Athenian, indeed un-Athenian, and as such they must have been a source of humour as well as of potential threat in the context of the drama. Many of them are overtly military; roosters were broadly regarded as aggressive. At the same time, one can be sure that any threat was overcome by the end of the performance. The them-and-us contrast must also have provided the audience with a comforting measure of self-identification.

From this series of vases as a whole, we may note that they are evidence of the public performance of comedy for some time before what we are told was its official recognition at the City Dionysia in 486 BC. These were relatively sophisticated performances, and the elaboration of the costume suggests that they were not inexpensive to produce; but we have no hint of how they were funded. From this perspective it is worth considering the reliability of the stated date of 486 BC.

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[7] Such an arrangement is on fact preserved in a terracotta figurine: Paris, Louvre, MNB 3017, Mollard-Besques (1954) 19, B 109, pl. 14; compare the figurine in Heidelberg, Hampe and Gropengiesser (1967) 54, 105, pl. 21b. By contrast, the costume of the bird-men on the jug in the British Museum is made more explicit, with the birds' feet being shown at the men's knees, so that the performers must have knelt when the birds came to rest: London 1842.7–28.787 (B 509), J.R. Green (1985a) 101 no. 8, fig. 11a–c.

This tradition of choruses representing a form of somewhat threatening if at the same time humorous 'other' survived until the time of Aristophanes: we know little enough of his *Babylonians*, but we do know his *Birds* of 414 BC or themes of women taking over the running of the city in a play such as *Ekklesiazousai*.

Another key point to emerge from these early depictions is the emphasis on the chorus as representing a comedy.[8] No actors are represented: they probably did not exist at this point. Most of the known plays of Old Comedy are named after their choruses, and when plays were recalled visually in Athens, it was by images of their choruses, even as late as the middle of the fourth century in quasi-official monuments recording victory in the competitions such as the fragments of marble relief from the Athenian Agora.[9] Individual characters played by actors were slow to emerge. Our earliest representation of a comic actor is on a cup-fragment of the decade 440–430 BC.[10] Once they found a place, however, one may guess that their prominence grew rapidly and that the dramatic action of comedy grew more complex at the same time. Aristophanes must have had a major role in this development, and by the time of his *Ploutos* in 388 BC the chorus had lost its place in the drama and served simply to create an interlude, attractive as its costume and dance may still have been. The fact that, at a popular level, the Athenians of this period and later still thought of comedies in terms of their choruses seems contradictory and it is a testament to the strength of tradition and and the effort that doubtless continued to be put into their physical appearance in the theatre.

By the later years of the fifth century Athenian tragedy, satyr-play and, apparently, comedy were quite regularly being performed outside Athens, and the evidence suggests that they were particularly popular in the Greek cities of Southern Italy and Sicily. Critical here are vases with painted decoration produced in Taranto and Metaponto. They show actors performing scenes from plays, not choruses. If we ask why this should be so, it is important to remember that these cities seem not to have had the tradition of choruses that was the visual language of Athenian comedy. Another much-discussed question involves the nature of the export process: it seems reasonable to suppose that comedies were taken by troupes of actors rather than sent as texts for locals to perform,

[8] See also Csapo in this volume.

[9] Athens, Agora S 1025 and 1586, *MMC*[3] AS 3, pl. IX.

[10] Athens, Agora P 10798, from Athens, Agora. Cup fragments. Moore (1997) 326 no. 1449, pl. 136.



Fig. 3. Tarentine red-figure calyx-krater. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. 1924.97.104. Ht 30.6 cm. Attributed to the Tarporley Painter. After Beazley (1952)

but it is not at all clear that the actors took companies of young men with them to perform the choruses. That is, the vase-painters, though themselves evidently trained by migrant Athenians in the first instance, may well have rejected the Athenian iconographic tradition because it was irrelevant.

One of the earliest surviving examples is a vase now in New York that was decorated by the Tarporley Painter in Taranto in South Italy (fig. 3).[11] It must date to about 400 BC. The scene shows the capture of a thief before a Scythian policeman with his staff, while up on the stage is an old woman with the evidence: a dead goose and a basket with what seems to be a kid. Also part of the stage complex is a doorway with porch of Ionic columns. Above the male figures is depicted the mask of a slave, while apparently at some distance over to the left is a standing youth holding drapery over his left shoulder. He is labelled ΤΡΑΓΟΙΔΟΣ (τραγῳδός), which has to imply a person connected with the performance of a tragedy. He is of

[11] New York 1924.97.104. Ht 30.6 cm. *RVAp* i, 46, no. 3/7; Maffre (2000) 306, fig. 28.

an age at which one might expect him to have been a member of a chorus.[12] What is particularly remarkable about the scene is that fragments of dialogue have been written running from each of the three figures. From the mouth of the old woman come (retrograde) the words ΕΓΩ-ΠΑΡΕΞΩ (ἐγὼ παρέξω) ("I'll provide the evidence"). From the head of the old man (again retrograde): ΚΑΤΕΔΗΣΑΝΩΤΩΧΕΙΡΕ (κατέδησ' ἄνω τὼ χεῖρε) (meaning something to the effect that his hands are bound up).[13] The words of the Scythian are in one sense simpler: NOPA-PETTEBΛO (perhaps νουραρεττεβλου rather than with omegas). It is nonsense since his attempts at speaking Greek are incomprehensible.

The doorway before which the woman stands is surprisingly elaborate, but there is no valid reason to suppose that it does not reflect the reality of the stage-building. The scene also provides an important indication of the height of the stage.

A small bell-krater now in Würzburg is decorated with a scene from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai*. The play was produced in Athens in 411 BC and the vase made in Taranto about 380 BC.[14] Delays of twenty years or even more are not unusual between original production in Athens and painted souvenirs of productions in the cities of South Italy (assuming we have our pottery dating more or less correct: it cannot be very far out at this period). On the other hand a vase reflecting performance of Euripides' *Cyclops* made in Metaponto in about 415–410 BC suggests a production very soon after the original performance in Athens.[15] The situation with these vases reminds us of the nature of pre-modern communications and the undoubted fact that there was much less perceived need to be absolutely up to the minute than in our own world. In assessing the value of the vases as evidence, we should also bear in mind that the occasion recalled on the pot was not necessarily the first time a play had been put on in Metaponto or Taranto. It may

[12] The meaning is disputed. It is irrelevant that the meaning of the word in later Greek is simply that of 'singer'.

[13] Again the detail is much disputed. The verb is often used of casting a spell and he may be saying that the old woman has tied up his hands in this way. There is certainly no evidence of thongs around his wrists.

[14] Würzburg H 5697. Ht 18.5 cm. *RVAp* i, 65 no. 4/4a; *CVA* (4) pl. 4, 1–4.

[15] And leaving aside the complications brought by the Sicilian Expedition. London 1947.7–14.18, Green–Handley (1995) no. 10. See also the comments of Allan (2001) and Marshall (2001). The latter has re-examined the much-discussed question of the date of Eur. *Cyclops* and considers a production-date of 408. The later one puts the play, the faster its transmission to Metaponto seems to have been—indeed in this case one would have to down-date the vase.

have become a favourite before becoming a suitable subject on a pot for sale. This in turn raises a much more difficult issue: the scene from *Thesmophoriazousai* could be regarded as a highlight of the play, and one which had the additional attraction of involving Euripides' *Telephos*, also a favourite play. Does the vase reflect a performance of the whole *Thesmophoriazousai* or just this scene—a scene from a collection of highlights similar to the way we are used to seeing (and hearing on record) famous arias from the opera? The play as a whole was one which included a fair amount of local Athenian content that may not have been much appreciated by a foreign audience. Play texts were not sacrosanct in the ancient world and we may bear in mind the way that Roman playwrights a couple of centuries later felt free to combine material from more than one Greek original as the basis for their own versions.[16]

Inscriptions on some of the vases giving the names of characters and occasionally fragments of text make it clear that the plays were performed in their original Attic dialect and were not translated into the Doric of the western Greek colonies. It must at times have made it hard work for the audience but it does not seem to have affected their popularity. Indeed it could have added a slightly special or exotic quality. The masks and costume worn by the actors were also Athenian in origin as we see not only from the vases but also from terracotta figurines.

In the later part of the fifth and the early fourth century, the actors of comedy as of all Greek drama were males. They wore tights that covered them from neck to wrist and ankle (fig. 3); under the tights they had heavy padding fixed over the belly and backside, and sometimes breasts as well. The seams down the sides of sleeves or leggings were often made clear by vase-painters. On the outside of the tights at the front was affixed a large leather phallos. Earlier depictions show it as long and hanging, but from the last years of the fifth century onwards, more and more productions seem to have had it looped up in a way that, to judge from the texts, was regarded as rather more decent. A performer wearing only this body-costume was regarded as 'stage-naked', and it was worn by all actors, even those playing female roles. The modifiers or creators of particular identity were any clothes placed over this costume such as a tunic, a cloak, sandals, a dress for a female, and of course the mask.[17] In Old Comedy there was not a great range of masks—this and the subtlety

[16] Gentili (1979, 2006).

[17] On the ideological function of the styles of men's and women's clothing in real life and on the tragic stage, see Battezzato (1999–2000).

they represented came with time—but enough to distinguish between free man and slave, stupid and clever.[18]

The other major source of evidence for the appearance of the comic actor from this period on is a huge number of terracotta figurines.[19] An original and influential series was made in Athens, probably in the last years of the fifth century, and it was continued in the same style and reproduced in copies for the next three quarters of a century, and sometimes even beyond.[20] Part of their attraction must have been that they could be reproduced cheaply in two-part moulds or often just from moulds taken from the fronts of existing figurines, so that they reached a very wide public, a much wider public than did painted vases. They could also be (and were) reproduced in towns throughout the Greek world that had no tradition of making painted vases.[21] This local copying also tells us that they had a market in the community which must therefore have known Athenian comedy.

From our perspective, a fundamental difference between them and what we see on pots is that the latter so far as possible depicted particular moments of particular plays, and doubtless whenever possible, scenes that characterised, typified or readily called to mind specific plays. In acquiring a figurine, a purchaser was thinking of a character-type. Even if it was possible to buy a number of characters as seen in a given play, and so as it were re-enact the play for oneself, the emphasis rested rather in the recognition of stock characters. And in fact full sets have rarely been found.[22] Their physical appearance is essentially the same as that of actors seen in vase-painting. For technical reasons of manufacture in two-part moulds as well as fragility after manufacture, they tend to be self-contained, with arms to the body and legs normally fairly close together, without the movement seen in vase-painting. Their three-dimensionality on the other hand emphasises the padding and their grotesqueness, the importance of body-language and not least the critical nature of the angle of the head, so central to all masked drama.[23]

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[18] J.R. Green (2003).

[19] Though now rather dated, the best collection of this kind of material is *MMC*[3]. See also my comparison between them and comic scenes on pots in J.R. Green (1991a).

[20] Another indication of the lack of pressing need to be up-to-the-minute.

[21] This of course demonstrating yet again that comic vases in South Italy and Sicily depict comedy of Athenian origin.

[22] The so-called New York Group is exceptional.

[23] On the main Athenian series, the phallos is tied up right from the beginning, but this is not so of others, and certainly not so of the Corinthian or Boeotian figurines which seem to begin by reflecting a more local style of comedy.

The appearance of the comic actor stood at the opposite end of the spectrum from the classical ideal. If one thinks, for example, of the young men of the Parthenon Frieze or of Polykleitos' Doryphoros, they have trim bodies and well-toned muscles, calm and deliberately unexpressive faces, not betraying emotion; and they have preternaturally small penises. A well-to-do Athenian's public behaviour was expected to exhibit control: he was not supposed to run or hurry but proceed steadily; he was not to look around and gawk; he should have trimmed hair and beard and proper clothes.[24] The costume and mask of the comic actor put him well outside this frame of reference. The performers were seen as anything but gentlemen (and those playing women anything but ladies). Indeed, in terms of the prejudices of contemporary Greeks, their physical appearance placed them outside the bounds of normal society. This, at least in part, is what allowed them to behave as they did on stage and to say the kinds of things they did about members of the Athenian community.

The performance style of Old Comedy seems to have been comparatively straightforward, with a lot of knockabout humour, pushing and shoving, threatened beatings with sticks and chasing about the stage. Figures were often shown stage-naked and vulnerable, as on the New York vase (fig. 3).[25] Accessories and equipment as visible emphases of characterisation or of plot were much more common than in later phases. Scenes involving women are relatively rare, and those that exist do not often seem to have given them speaking parts.[26] (Aristophanes was quite likely exceptional in this respect.)

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[24] Bremmer (1991). Note how in the battles of Lapiths and Centaurs on the Parthenon metopes, the Lapiths have calm faces despite the struggle, whereas those of the Centaurs, the outsiders, the other, are contorted.

[25] Compare for example [1] Sydney 88.02 with a naked male pursued by a figure with a club: *RVAp* Suppl. ii, 28, no. 5/200b; J.R. Green et al (2003) 49–50 no. 17, colour ills.; [2] Richmond (Va.) 78.83 with a naked old man (L) carrying a rope while two slaves (B) converse, ignoring him: J.R. Green (2003) 178–184; *RVAp* i, 68 no. 4/33; [3] London 1849.6–20.13 (F 151) with two figures pushing the old man Chiron up the stairs: *RVAp* i, 100 no. 4/252; Green–Handley (1995) 54 fig. 28, colour; [4] once Berlin F 3046 with Herakles banging on a door followed by a slave on a stage donkey: Taplin (1993) pl. 13, no. 7; [5] Berlin F 3043 with a slave held by a rope about his neck and beaten by another slave: *LCS* 43 no. 212, pl. 16, 5–6; [6] Metaponto 29340 with Ixion on the wheel: D'Andria (1975) 402, fig. 51a, no. 164; LCS Suppl. iii, 64, no. D 64; and [7] the bell krater Boston 69.951, which seems to reflect a different performance of the play seen in fig. 3; *RVAp* i, 100 no. 4/251; Padgett et al. (1993) 68–70, no. 13, ill., and colour pl. V, with refs.

[26] J.J. Henderson (2000), Souto Delibes (2002), and, on the basis of the material evidence, J.R. Green (2001).

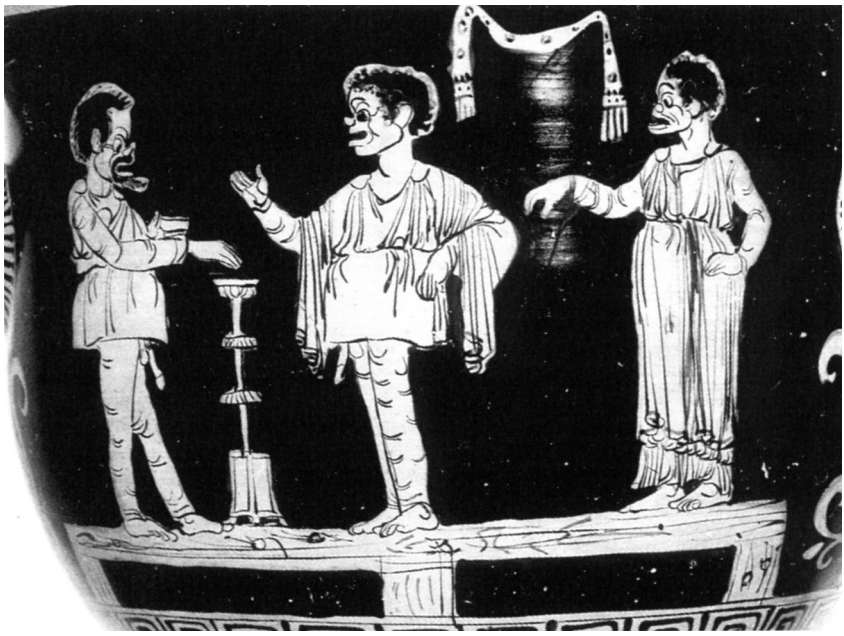


Fig. 4. Apulian red-figure bell-krater. Madrid 1999/99/122. Ht 28.3 cm. Attributed to the Cotugno Painter. After Sotheby, *Sale Cat*.

This is probably about as far as one can generalise from the material evidence, and it is made the more difficult because there is at the same time evidence of constant, and increasingly rapid, change, but this change was not uniform across all playwrights. One thing that is clear from the material remains is that the audience often seems to have enjoyed old-fashioned humour rather than the more modern, more subtle sort; but the situation is not always clear-cut. As an example we may take an Apulian vase (fig. 4) given recently to the Archaeological Museum in Madrid but not widely known.[27] It is datable about 370–360 BC. Here we see hanging phalloi reduced in size, a compromise perhaps. The scene looks like a domestic one and more like Middle than Old Comedy. A young man in the centre is in lively discussion with a slave who is putting incense on an incense-burner from a box in his left hand. A woman on the right is expressing her views on the subject as well. In terms of appearance and costume, notice that the padding of the figures is no

[27] Madrid 1999/99/122, bell-krater, ht 28.3 cm, Christie's (London), *Sale Cat*., 13 December 1995, no. 233 (colour ill.); Cabrera Bonet (2003) 359–360 no. 128 (ill.).

longer so exaggerated. They are all clothed, the slave typically wearing an exomis that is fixed over the left shoulder. The young man is shown as 'elegant' with a cloak that comes over his upper arms. His chiton terminates a little lower than in the previous generation. Whatever her mask looks like (all women before the middle of the century are made to look ugly), to judge by her dress, the woman is of some standing. The left hand on hip, the static position of the feet, and the position of her right hand are to be read as demonstrating her strong opinion, though the angle of the right hand suggests she may not be winning.[28] It is possible, because of the incense-burner and the sash up above, that we are in a sanctuary and she a priestess. An old-fashioned element is that none of them has footwear. Newer are the generic situation, the fact that the female has an active, speaking part, and that a major role is given to the young man. They stand on a patently timber stage that is quite low, what one might think of as a conventional depiction of the metre-high stage (see below).

On a Sicilian vase of the middle of the century or very soon after (fig. 5), both figures wear sandals.[29] To judge by his pose and the position of his hands, the slave sits trembling with fear, real or pretended, in refuge on the altar in a sanctuary. His master takes his time about reciting his sins: he leans on his staff and rests his right leg. Unusually for this period, the slave is stage-naked and the fact is doubtless an expression of his pathetic quality. The white-haired old man is well-dressed, with a himation that covers his left arm. It just reveals a small, tied-up phallos. Both still wear padding. Although it is not visible in our illustration, the stage on which they stand is shown as quite high.

From this point, the change in style becomes more rapid. A useful example of this transitional phase to what we regard as New Comedy is a

[28] Hand-gestures are of course the most culture-specific aspect of body-language and therefore the most dangerous to interpret simply out of one's own experience. In addition there are often variations particular to classes within a community, and in any case it seems common for upper classes to gesture less than lower, or at least less obviously. It would be interesting to know if the actors of Athenian comedy in the west used Athenian gestures or those proper to the local western communities, but there is probably not enough evidence. Gesture was inevitably an important factor in performance in front of audiences numbered in thousands, but we should also be conscious that the vase-painter used them to convey a situation to the viewer. See J.R. Green (2001), with further references, and Jorio (2000).

[29] Gela 643, from Manfria, skyphoid krater, ht as restored 21.8 cm, Orlandini (1953) 155 fig. 1 (the best description, the fragments shown before restoration in plaster); *LCS* 595 no. 69, pl. 231, 2.



Fig. 5. Sicilian red-figure skyphoid krater. Gela 643, from Manfria. Ht as restored 21.8 cm. Photo: J.R. Green

red-figure calyx-krater found not many years ago during the excavation of a cemetery in Messina (fig. 6).[30] It was made in Sicily, probably in Syracuse, about 330 BC. We have a four-figure composition. From left to right are a young woman, a young man, a portly figure facing him and wearing long dress and white slippers, and then, watching from the right, a white-haired older man leaning on his stick. Between the two central figures is a *thymiaterion* (incense-burner). In seeking to understand the plot, the key figure is the one with long dress in the centre. The attire is apparently that of a girl, and it is, perhaps deliberately, comparable with that of the girl on the left. Both wear long cloaks and have purple-red sleeves. Yet when we look more closely, ignoring the dress and the finger-gestures, the mask is that of a slave and so is the fatness of the figure. It is a slave dressed up as a girl, and most likely as a bride (thus the incense-burner for a sanctuary in the context of a wedding). The body-language of the young man, and his gesture with the left hand, make clear his surprise as he looks round to what is presumably his real bride as she comes in

[30] Messina, Soprintendenza 11039, from Messina, via S. Marta (1989) t. 33, J.R. Green (2002) 114 fig. 23, with refs. Attributed to the Manfria Painter.



Fig. 6(a). Sicilian red-figure calyx-krater. Messina, Soprintendenza 11039, from Messina. Ht 44 cm. Attributed to the Manfria Painter. After J.R. Green (2002)

from the left of the stage. At this point the older man has no active part in the events and, without having the script, it is hard to know whose father he is, the real bride's or the young man's. What is likely is that he has been involved in the hoax, and the ruse has been blown apart by the girl's appearance; perhaps he did not want the young man to marry the girl.

Disguising oneself on stage has a long history—one thinks, for example, of the Herakles sequence in Aristophanes' *Frogs*—and for it to work, certain conventions have to be observed so that the audience can be participant in the fun. Ideally they should witness the dressing-up process, which can itself be comic, but most importantly the character needs to retain his normal mask. This has not only a practical function so that the audience can follow and identify him through the subsequent scenes (they should never be in doubt about his real identity and role), but a symbolic one given the identity of mask and character in Greek comedy. The plot on the vase reminds one vividly of Plautus' *Casina*, which in turn



Fig. 6(b)

was adapted from Diphilos' *Kleroumenoi*, a play of this very period and one to be considered as a source for this painting.[31]

The painter has attempted to capture the actors' movements and body-language. The centre of interest, the slave-cum-bride, hams up the part with dainty footsteps and fluttering fingers, head coyly to one side—a ridiculous contrast with the gross form of his body. The young man was presumably approaching the slave, but twists back as he is actually touched by his real girl. (On the vase it is possible to make out where the white of her hand came across his forearm.) This is a rare event. Girls did not normally do such things but, by convention, behaved very properly on stage. It is her reaction to a happening she must have found strange, to say the least. Her cloak has slipped away from over her head, exposing her hair and even her arm (her face and hands were painted in white which has worn away). For the old man, the stance and the positioning

[31] See Handley (1997) 194–196.

of the arms in front of the body make him look uptight, closed in on himself. As to costume, he is the only one of traditional appearance, with just a small phallos visible below his short cloak. It suits the conservative character of the part. The youth wears an up-to-date young man's mask, beardless and with wavy hair that by convention indicates a lively nature. His costume now comes just below the knee, as one might see an active younger man about the streets of town, but the painter has shown the bottom of his actor's leggings just above the sandals. His left arm, apart from the hand, was largely concealed, as was still considered proper at the time: we see the same for the old man. They were not working people who needed their arms unencumbered. Another sign of his social status is the staff shown in white and just visible between him and the girl. Males in general carry more padding than females. As just noted, the girl is a proper one as we see also from her simple hairstyle and lack of jewellery.

The staging of comedy is steadily becoming more naturalistic, although one should not ignore the continuing conventions, such as the gross padding of the slave. Those to develop more quickly are the young, growingly the heroes of comedy, the figures around whom the plot of the drama revolves. The relative slimness of the figure playing the young woman is new. She has every appearance of being characterised as a good Athenian girl, with a simple hairstyle and little showy jewellery. The old men are typically crusty, and this is emphasised by their old-fashioned style of costume, worn short to expose the phallos. The differences in body-shape were of course achieved by padding, and we should remember that in Greek theatre, actors were required to play more than one part. To change from one part to another was now a more complex problem, and writers must have had to build in a longer time off stage for actors changing role.

In the background are columns such as we see on many Sicilian vases connected with theatre (as also fig. 5). They reflect semi-columns incorporated in the front of the stage-building itself. We know they were present on the stage-building in Athens too.[32] The supports for the stage are plain pillars, but in this case we have two stairways of five or six steps leading up to it. On vases of the late fifth and the earlier part of the fourth century there were usually four, implying a stage-height of about a metre above the level of the *orchestra* (cf. fig. 3). After about 370–360 BC, six to

[32] Townsend (1986).

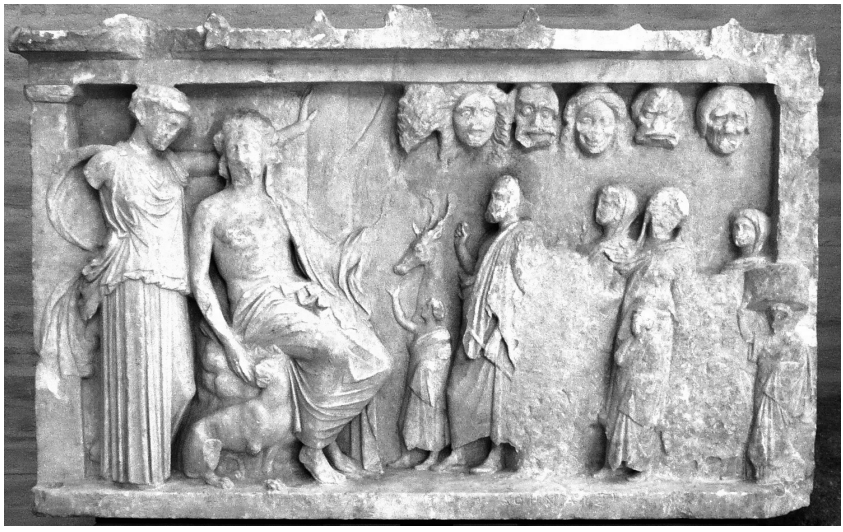


Fig. 7. Attic Marble relief. Munich, Glyptothek 552. Ht 75 cm; width 119.5 cm. After Vierneisel and Scholl (2002)

eight steps such as we see here is standard, implying a height of about 1.6 or 1.8 metres.[33]

An important document, also datable to about 330 BC, is a relief in Munich (fig. 7).[34] It is of Pentelic marble and seems likely to come from Brauron in eastern Attica. The relief is set within an architectural frame. At the left, Dionysos is seated on a rock with a thyrsos in his left hand and his right at the neck of a resting panther. He looks back to the figure of Artemis (to whom the sanctuary was of course dedicated; she is labelled on the socle of the relief). She is conceived as being virtually alongside him, and she relaxes with her left hand reaching behind him to lean against a tree. On a smaller scale and approaching them from the right together with a young stag, demonstrating the association with Artemis, is a family of a man, women and children. The man appears to carry an aulos. Shown as hanging in the field above them are five comic masks,

[33] For the depictions on vases, see J.R. Green (2001). Goette (1999) comments on developments in the Theatre of Dionysos at Athens which he argues independently underwent a major makeover on similar lines about 370–360 BC, not later, under Lykourgos, as used to be supposed.

[34] Munich, Glyptothek 552, ht 75 cm; width 119.5 cm. In the primary publication, Vierneisel and Scholl (2002) propose a date of ca. 350 BC, but the style of the masks suggests that it belongs nearer the beginning of New Comedy.



Fig. 8. Sicilian red-figure calyx-krater. Paris, Louvre CA 7249. Ht 57 cm. Attributed to the Lentini-Manfria Group. After Pasquier (1998)

very clearly done: a young woman, an older man, a younger woman with parted hair, a slave and an old woman. It was of course standard practice to dedicate the masks in the sanctuary of the god following a successful performance.[35]

[35] J.R. Green (1982).

The relatively small female immediately behind the approaching man is named ΑΘΗΝΑΙΣ (Athenaïs). (Curiously, her figure was removed at some point.) One of the other exciting aspects of the document is that the name Athenaïs occurs in the treasury records of the sanctuary of Brauronian Artemis on the Acropolis at Athens for the year 345/344 BC, as having presented clothing for the goddess. She must have been a local of some wealth and distinction whose family also sponsored the staging of a comedy, quite likely at the Rural Dionysia in Brauron.[36]

The set of masks would make a credible cast of a play. If we look at them more closely, that of the young woman over at the left, next to the head of the thyrsos, is characterised by its full, wavy (but not curly) hair with central parting. It has a slightly worried expression, created by the slight furrows on the brow and the way the lids of the eyes come down at the sides. It is probably to be identified as that of the so-called pseudokore, the girl who through unfortunate circumstances appears to be a hetaira, the girl with whom the hero falls in love, and who will be found to be an Athenian after all. Note that the mouth is smaller than that of the real hetaira in the middle of the series: it is a signifier that she is more proper. This mask appears in vase-painting quite commonly, often held by Dionysos. Although the beard of the next is damaged, the mask-type is clearly that of the leading old man, one of the most commonly represented of the period and regularly used to typify Comedy.[37] He is often cast as a father, and although in New Comedy proper he tends to lose his importance to that of the younger generation, at this transitional phase he can often be a principal character around whom the action revolves. It is useful to compare a Sicilian calyx-krater, also of about 330 BC in the Louvre (fig. 8).[38]

The central mask is, as noted, a hetaira mask. It has parted hair, wavy but becoming curly in the ringlets, slightly small eyes, and a snub nose (thought of as evidence of cheekiness in a young female). An amusing example in vase-painting is to be found on a fragment of a situla found at Policoro in South Italy (fig. 9) where she warmly greets an older man

[36] Interestingly enough, we have a partially-preserved stele congratulating two choregoi on their splendid performance. One cannot know what they put on, but the inscription says the stele was to be erected in the sanctuary of Dionysos, and it therefore implies a theatre at Brauron in 341/0 BC, that is, quite close to the date of the relief now in Munich. Bardani (1992–1998), referred to also by Whitehead (1986) 381 no. 61.

[37] This is Mask 3 of the New Comedy sequence: see *MNC*[3] i, 9–11.

[38] Paris, Louvre CA 7249. Ht 57 cm. Pasquier (1998). Lentini-Manfria Group.



Fig. 9. Fragment of a red-figure situla. Policoro, from Aliano. After J.R. Green (2001) 38 fig. 1

who is so foolish as to be carrying a purse.[39] The next mask to the right is the mask of the leading slave. Again much of the beard is missing and it should be imagined as coming more or less to the level of the chins of the adjoining masks. It has a squat nose (the male equivalent of that

[39] Policoro, from Aliano. J.R. Green (2001) 38 fig. 1 (colour, where I observed that this is a rare case of one figure actually touching another in a comic scene); ca. 360–350 BC.

on the hetaira mask) and a frowning expression that seems to convey an intentness and perhaps a deviousness when compared with the more open countenance of that of the Old Man. The type appears commonly in terracotta mask-models and is probably to be related to that of the draped figure on the Louvre krater (fig. 8). The detail is not well preserved but the main dialogue is between an old man with mask very like ours and another male who stands in a relaxed pose with his legs crossed. He is also dressed like a gentleman, in full himation and his left hand concealed within it; yet his mask is that of a slave, so he is dressed up to deceive. His mask too is comparable to that of the slave-mask on the Munich relief. To the far right of the scene is a hetaira, although her head is unfortunately worn. On the left a woman is coming out of a door and overhears what is going on. Again one wishes the detail were better preserved, but it looks as if she is a pseudokore with a mask like that on the Munich relief.[40]

The mask on the far right is that of an old woman. It has only one or two teeth, sunken cheeks, and what was interpreted as a rather bitter expression.[41] The character was doubtless in charge of the premises from which the hetaira operated, and one sees the same character in a similar role in the *Synaristosai* mosaic (fig. 12).

These five characters give plenty of scope for dramatic action. Four of them reappear on the Louvre krater. We may also note that there are three females now, and two males. The more important point still is that each of the masks implies a character, a personality, so that, in the words later attributed to Menander, the characters and the plot are determined and there is only the dialogue to write.[42]

The relief stands at the cusp of a high period in the evolution of Athenian theatre in general and of comedy in particular, and it was certainly regarded as such in later times. Much of this development was performance-based. One can argue for a consciousness of the rapid change in the costume of comedy in the direction of a greater naturalism, as well as of the standardisation of a sophisticated series of comic masks that were linked to current readings of physiognomy (all this associated with the establishment of so-called New Comedy). The masks of tragedy developed more expression in the facial features (as we also find in contemporary vase-painting and sculpture), and we seem to have the introduction of the onkos, which was to remain a major feature of the tragic

[40] See the traces of hair at the side of the neck.
[41] This is Mask 28 of the New Comedy sequence: see *MNC*[3] i, 35–37.
[42] Plutarch, *Moralia* 347e.

mask for the rest of antiquity. This is the original period of the description of comic and tragic masks utilised some five centuries later by the encyclopedist Pollux. Immediately following, at the turn of the fourth and third centuries BC, is the series of paintings of scenes from comedy and tragedy, echoed in later mosaics and paintings: they seem to have been treating this phase as classic already. There is the series of portrait statues of major writers set up by Lykourgos in the sanctuary of Dionysos at Athens. There is the collection of older texts and the desire to establish their content (as well as the apparent competition to 'own' them). There is the establishment of a inscribed set of *didaskaliai* or historical record of victors in performances. It is also the period which seems to have driven the formation of the actors' guilds. This is not to mention the construction of many theatres, such as the huge one at Epidaurus, estimated to have held over twelve thousand people. Then in later periods, we have for instance the masks attached to the exterior of the Theatre of Marcellus in Rome that echo the masks of this period in their style as a public statement of what was regarded as classic theatre in the time of Augustus, not to mention all the minor objects in private hands in that period that again echo material of this period.[43] The masks from the Villa of Hadrian at Tivoli again reflect Early Hellenistic style, even if in a modified way that suits contemporary purposes. And then there is the evidence of Roman choregic inscriptions: their revival in Athens under the Flavians deliberately echoed the formulae and letter-style of those of this period.[44] (We may note by contrast that those produced under the later part of Hadrian's reign and the Antonines generally follow the orthography and writing style of the fifth century, which western scholars of more recent times have for their part regarded as classic.) Some aspects of this perception must of course have been linked to the fact that Menander had become a standard text in the symposion and the schoolroom, but the material evidence has its own story to tell.

It is at this critical point that the evidence of painted vases disappears. We are left with figurines in clay and sometimes in bronze, but more often with small models of masks. These last come in an elaborate series of about forty types of old men, young men, slaves and professionals, young women proper and otherwise, old women, and so on, which seem to have been instantly recognisable to the spectator in the audience or

[43] See *MNC*[3], *passim*.
[44] Aleshire (1999); Follet and Peppas Delmousou (2001).

the viewer of the object. They were an aid in following the plot with all its twists and turns, not least because they followed contemporary conventions and/or prejudices in physiognomy and general appearance, but also because the males, whose activities were still the most significant factors in the drama, were constructed according to type-systems that allowed one to recognise that a given father, son and slave belonged to a single family or household. As the comedies themselves revolved increasingly about the interplay of character-types as individuals, so their masks assisted in the process and were at the same time recognisable as standing for individuals with relatively predictable characters. All this forms some of the background to their reproduction in clay, metal, paint, glass, mosaic and marble, whether in their own right or to decorate other objects in home or sanctuary. In the time of Diphilos and Menander—that is in the Early Hellenistic period of the late fourth and early third centuries BC—the most popular masks are still those of old men and leading slaves, presumably because their interactions lay at the core of comedy; but on vessels designed for use in the symposium, masks of *hetairai* (girls from the escort agency) are far more popular, presumably because *hetairai* themselves were items of interest during and/or after the drinking—whatever the conversational interest of theatre plots involving young women of this kind. Art and life imitated each other.

Although it would seem that Menander did not often win the prize during his lifetime (he probably died in 292/291 BC), he was quickly given heroic status, commemorated by a statue placed by the theatre in Athens.[45] A number of his plays were recorded in a series of paintings, probably placed somewhere in the sanctuary of Dionysos, possibly the god's temple. None of the originals survives, but we have copies in a range of media that were reproduced in one way or another, for one purpose or another, until the end of Antiquity. They seem to have been created in an up-to-date, contemporary style, and their apparent sophistication suggests that they were carried out by a well-known painter or painters. The scene depicted seems in each case to have been chosen so as to represent a critical moment that at the same time characterised the play.

[45] See now the important article by Papastamati (2007). Zanker (1996) 77–85, has important things to say about the statue of Menander at the Theatre of Dionysos and its reading as a social and political statement. See also Palagia (2005). Blanchard (1997) looks at the popularity and reception of Menander, from his initial position as a member of the Establishment with Demetrios of Phaleron, his unpopularity with the new democrats after the latter's expulsion, and then his reinstatement immediately after his death at the hands of the new conservatives.



Fig. 10. Mosaic with a scene from Menander's *Theophoroumene*, signed by Dioskourides. Naples 9985, from Pompeii, 'Villa of Cicero'. Ht 43.7 cm. After Andreae (2003)

They do not seem to have been labelled any more than scenes on vases had been labelled: the viewer was assumed to be able to recognise the play in question. This in its turn is evidence of the continuing visual impact of comedy as seen on stage.

Three examples are well known. Two are the famous mosaics made by Dioskourides of Samos, and they form the best evidence for the character of these paintings in terms of their compositions and the subtleties of execution such as the careful use of highlight and shade. Although they were preserved in a house at Pompeii, buried in the eruption of AD 79, their technique and the form of the lettering on them suggest that they were in fact manufactured in the later years of the second century BC. It is also worth noting that they were made as independent panels for insertion



Fig. 11. Painting with a scene from Menander's *Theophoroumene*. Naples 9034, from Stabiae. After Andreae (2003)

into larger floor surfaces. One of them has Menander's *Theophoroumene* or the *Girl Possessed* [*by the Goddess*] (fig. 10).[46] Another, though less good, version of this last has recently been discovered in the Pompeii storerooms, and its date cannot be very much later than that of Dioskourides' version.[47] The scene is also known in a wall-painting from a villa at Stabiae (again destroyed by Vesuvius) (fig. 11).[48] At much the same period as the Dioskourides mosaic, terracotta figurines of two of the key figures, the two young men, were made in multiple copies in coastal Asia Minor.[49] They must have been designed to stand in three-dimensional re-creations of the scene.

[46] Naples 9985. Ht 43.7 cm. *MNC*[3] 3DM 2, with references, and XZ 39–40. See also Donati (1998) 254 (colour ill.) and 320 no. 162 (shown opposite the painting from Stabiae); Zapheiropoulou (2006) no. 67.

[47] Stefani (1999) 289 fig. 4. The identification is clear even though the centre of the panel has been lost. It shows a number of interesting modifications from the original: see J.R. Green (2008) 231.

[48] Naples 9034. Ht 21 cm; width 31 cm. *MNC*[3] 5NP 1. Best illustrated in Donati (1998) 255 (colour ill.) and 320 no. 163; Andreae (2003) 219–227 (colour ills).

[49] *MNC*[3] 3DT 16a–c (tympanon-player); 3DT 17a–b (cymbal-player).

The basic theme here is that the young men are dancing in the street to strange eastern music in an attempt to make the girl of their attentions, who has been possessed by the goddess Cybele, come out of the house, the door of which is shown on the far right of the scene. The artist whose painting lies behind these reproductions had created a striking image both in the action and in the emphasis being to the right rather than in the centre of the scene. It is technically interesting, too, with its careful use of shadows and the highlights on the males and the drapery of the female, and then the angled views and the turning posture of the young man with the tambourine. Notice the way it conveys the intentness of the young man with the small cymbals, keeping up the beat of the music, and the way in which he gives his companion room to whirl around. There is also the intricacy of the drapery and the wreaths around their heads. (There has been some restoration of the two figures on the left of the mosaic.)

One thing we do not know is the shape of the original painting. Square pictures such as Dioskourides created here are comparatively rare except in mosaics, and the copy of the same scene in a wall-painting from Stabiae (at proportions of 2:3) suggests that he compressed an image that was rather longer horizontally. One would certainly expect that Menander as stage director would not have had the scene cramped when he put it on the stage.

Mosaics present colour, and there is little doubt that the colour of an individual's costume was a signifier of status and style (not to mention fashion), but given the essentially monochrome quality of the same scene in the vase-paintings and the loss of colour from terracottas and sculpture, we simply do not have enough evidence to pursue the issue. The colours used for the clothing in the painting from Stabiae are roughly the same if less subtle in their handling than those of the mosaic. The point is one of some importance for the mode of transmission of these images: they cannot simply have been line drawings, unless they also had careful notes of the colouring, and drawn sketches there must have been, despite the arguments of Bruneau.[50] But they are unlikely to have been large or very detailed, and they were open to damage, especially if on a material such as papyrus.

The other of Dioskourides' mosaics has Menander's *Synaristosai* or *Women at Breakfast* (fig. 12).[51] It is an interesting and novel composition,

[50] Bruneau (1984), (1999), (2000); but see now Donderer (2006) and Mielsch (2008).

[51] Naples 9987. Ht 42 cm. *MNC*^{3} 3DM 1, with references, and XZ 37–38. Also Green–Handley (1995) 78 no. 50 (colour ill.); Zapheiropoulou (2006) no. 66; Andreae (2003) 218–227 (colour ills).



Fig. 12. Mosaic with a scene from Menander's *Synaristosai*, signed by Dioskourides. Naples 9987, from Pompeii, 'Villa of Cicero'. Ht 42 cm. After Andreae (2003)

with the brothel-keeper (or madam) and her two girls seated at a table. It portrays the striking opening scene of Menander's play.

The scene from *Synaristosai* has an even longer history. It occurs in a modified version among the collection of such scenes as mosaics for a symposium room for a house at Mytilene in Lesbos, perhaps of the



Fig. 13. Mosaic with a scene from Menander's *Synaristosai*. Mytilene (Lesbos). After Ginouvès–Kahil (1970)

second half of the fourth century AD (fig. 13).[52] In this case the scene is labelled with the name of the play and the characters—with all that that might imply about the way these scenes were now known, and their function for the viewers. Somewhat earlier, perhaps towards the middle of the third century, an artist by the name of Zosimos had created a non-theatrical version of the scene at Zeugma on the Euphrates (fig. 14),

[52] On the series of mosaics at Mytilene, see in the first instance Ginouvès–Kahil (1970) and inter alia more recently Csapo (1997a), Csapo (1999), Handley (1997); Ferrari (2004).



Fig. 14. Mosaic with a scene derived from Menander's *Synaristosai*, signed by Zosimos. Zeugma. After Onal (2002)

labelling it and putting it in an architectural context reminiscent of the stage-building of a Roman theatre, but having the characters as 'real' rather than actors.[53]

The comparison between these versions is instructive. At Zeugma the old woman is on the right as in the Dioskourides mosaic. In both cases she sits in a simple throne-like chair (as also at Mytilene, despite the reversal of the image). The girls continue to sit on a shared couch which at Zeugma resembles an overstuffed settee. The table still has three curving legs. The attendants are two rather than the earlier one, and female rather than the earlier boy. It is the women who are in many ways surprising. The clothing has something of the same colours, yellow-brown for Plangon and a reddish colour for Pythias, but they seem very different in character with more enveloping, fuller, classicising garments,

[53] On this fairly recent discovery, see among others Abadie-Reynal and Darmon (2003); Darmon 2004; W.G. Arnott (2004c). Onal (2002) 60–63 gives a colour illustration.



Fig. 15. Marble relief with a scene from Menander.
Naples 6687. 45 × 53 cm. After Schreiber (1894)

and they are made much larger and more prominent than the old woman who is smaller and in general less emphatic, a minor figure. Nor does she hold a cup; instead her right hand holds her drapery somewhat in the manner of a Roman matron. Plangon's right hand retains a speaking gesture, even if its actual form has changed. Their poses are the same but they are differently interpreted. One wonders how much Zosimos really knew about Menander. This has become a respectable, country-house tea-party. And one would certainly have been slower to pick up the reference without the inscription.

Our last example comes from a play we can no longer name. It is best known from the relief in Naples that has been a standard item in the textbooks since the nineteenth century (fig. 15).[54] More recently it has

[54] Naples 6687, Schreiber (1894) pl. 83; Pickard-Cambridge (1968) fig. 110; Brein (1972); J.R. Green (1985b), pl. 52, 1; *MNC*[3] 4XS 1. Not from Pompeii (as has often been assumed) since described already in 1736. Reassembled from fragments, but no modern parts or alterations, no damage of importance save that the beard of the angry man is

been recognised in a number of other items, including extracts. The best is a cameo in Geneva that dates to about 100 BC.[55] The scene is, quite unusually, a five-figure one. It is balanced around the flute-girl in the centre, and she already gives a hint of a party. Passing in front of her is a young man, drunk, and needing the support of his slave. Over on the left are two older men. One of them, the one with the staff, is the young man's father and he makes to give him a piece of his mind; but he is held back by his friend who hangs onto his right arm. There is a nice contrast between the father who is struggling to move, and the son who needs help in order to move.

Excerpts are numerous from before 300 BC to at least the fourth century AD, a time when notions of the play were apparently becoming unclear.[56] The detail selected for excerpts was the boy and supporting slave, suggesting that the point of the scene lay in his speech, more than in the intervention by the older men; one wonders from the latest examples if the speech perhaps survived as a famous recitation number rather than in the play context. If the leading feature was a grand speech made by someone in an intoxicated condition, *Methe* would at least be an apposite title.

It is interesting that the basic format of the original paintings was preserved over the centuries, if with some modifications to meet a particular setting and function, and yet that the masks and costume of the images were so often updated to conform with contemporary practice. The educated eye could recognise the arrangement as belonging to a given play. We only rarely have that experience.[57] The implications are worth considering. It of course reflects the continuing importance of the visual element of ancient theatre even in the Hellenistic and Roman periods when there was rather more competition for attention than there had been in the fifth century. At the same time it reflects an assumption that about 300 BC on the stage in Athens was the classic moment, that was when the

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chipped below. The masks suggest a date near the middle of the first century AD for the relief or its immediate source; the architectural shapes of the background, which seem like a copyist's addition or variation, are unlikely before Flavian times. 0.45 x 0.53 m.

[55] Vollenweider (1979) 294 f., no. 312, pl. 95 and colour pl. VIII; J.R. Green (1985b) pl. 52, 2; J.R. Green (1994) 138.

[56] *MNC*[3] 1BT 1, 4DT 1, 4NT 1, 6RC 1, 6DI 1, 6XI 1.

[57] One thinks, for example, of Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr in each other's arms at the water's edge as the waves lap over them in Fred Zinnemann's *From Here to Eternity* (1953), but one doubts if the memory will last for centuries. The staging of classical ballet has in the past carried something of the phenomenon.

play was crystallised, however much society changed, however much the Greek language changed. Rather paradoxically, perhaps, there was still a need to bring things up to date in other aspects of the performance, such as the masks (now more formalised) and costume (now heavier and stiffer) and, as the Mytilene mosaics make clear, in the style of movement, in a growing frontality in keeping with what one sees emerging in contemporary art as a whole, and in a more restrained body language that echoed the growing distaste for the overt display of emotions.

The plays of Menander survived in performance because they became classic in a way that was never given to his predecessors; but when contemporary taste finally rejected him, his scripts were lost too, whereas, perhaps ironically, a small selection of the scripts of one of his predecessors, Aristophanes, survived as a special kind of literature.[58]

[58] On the disappearance of Menander, see Blanchard (1997), Blume (1998) 16 ff.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE OF COMEDY IN ANTIQUITY

Eric Csapo

With rare exceptions, the ancients gained acquaintance with drama through performance. We know of no Greek drama written primarily for readers.[1] Drama did begin to circulate widely in book form around the end of the fifth century BCE,[2] and we know of authors who revised their play texts for circulation. We even hear of the publication of unproduced plays. The text of Aristophanes' *Clouds* appears to be such a revision; to our knowledge this revised text was never performed—indeed, some think it unperformable. But the form in which ancient play texts circulated is enough to show just how different a function they served from the volumes of dramatic literature that circulate today. The earliest dramatic texts presented a continuous flow of letters, with no separation of words or phrases, no punctuation, no identification of speakers, no marks to show changes of speaker, and no stage directions. They were virtually unreadable to anyone without prior acquaintance with the play. A surprising number of dramatic papyri even mark lines, not with the names of characters who speak them, but with "first," "second," or "third," signaling how the roles are to be distributed among performers.[3] This is because ancient dramatic texts served more as aide-mémoires than substitutes for performance, not only when such texts were used by professional actors, but also even when used by ordinary people. For most of antiquity, dramatic songs, speeches, and dialogues were better known from recitations and performances in schoolrooms and at dinner parties than from theatrical productions. Even when later publishers did add some of the aids to the reader that we take for granted, it was usually in

[1] In Aristotle *Rhet*. 1413b, often cited as evidence to the contrary, Aristotle says that Chaeremon wrote in a "readerly" style, not that his "works are only meant for reading" (as Freese translates it in the Loeb edition). There can be little doubt that Chaeremon wrote for the stage: see Xanthakis-Karamanos (1980, 7).

[2] Henceforth all dates will be BCE unless indicated otherwise.

[3] Jory (1963); Harder (1985, 22–24).

so sloppy and inconsistent a way that they offered little further encouragement for use in the kind of private, silent, and abstract activity we call "reading." Dio Chrysostom warns the serious student against attempting to read the texts of Euripides and Menander by himself, but to listen to others who are skilled at acting, because "the man who spares himself the strain of reading is more attentive."[4] Those who did read dramatic texts to themselves habitually read aloud for a better appreciation of the verse and characterization.[5] Diomedes recommended that readers sing poetic lyrics when they found them in the text, even if they did not know the tune.[6] Reading was itself a form of performance: Quintilian encouraged young men to take "reading" lessons from comic actors.[7] Clearly drama in antiquity was not "read" and not "literature" in anything like our modern sense of the terms.

Despite this, scholarship on ancient drama has primarily been directed towards texts, not performance. Performance studies of ancient drama are still an emerging and minor subdiscipline of classical "literature." Questions of production and performance have a reputation for being inconclusive. The evidence is indeed diverse and complex. The play texts offer only limited help. For the rest we rely upon such disparate and indirect sources as the passing remarks of contemporary prose authors, artistic representations of theatrical performance, inscriptions, architectural remnants, and the fragments of Hellenistic scholarship (mainly preserved in lexica and notes in the margins of our manuscripts). Each type of evidence presents sometimes daunting methodological difficulties. Nevertheless the last few decades have seen major progress in the careful collection, publication, and interpretation of these genres of evidence. This has led to a number of breakthroughs challenging some of the most basic traditional beliefs about ancient theater.

1. *The Performance Contexts*

Chapters on ancient Greek theater often begin by stressing four major differences in the circumstances of production between ancient and modern drama: that ancient drama was intended for one performance only, that it was performed in large round theaters for citizen audiences,

[4] Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 18.6–7.
[5] Knox (1968); Cribiore (2001, 190, n. 27 with further literature).
[6] Diomedes *ap.* Dionysius Thrax, *Ars Grammatica* in *Grammatici Graeci* 1.3.19–21.
[7] Quintilian *Inst. Or.* 1.11.12–14.; Bonner (1977, 215–218, 224); Fantham (1984).

that it took place at a festival of Dionysus, and that it formed part of a competition. These are all clichés that our current understanding of details of production show to be misleading, or needing qualification.

a. *The Times and Places of Production*

The current orthodoxy holds that in the fifth-century drama was a nearly exclusively Athenian concern, functioning to promote civic solidarity and create an identity for Athenian citizens, usually at the expense of other Greeks. The view relies heavily upon the assumption that drama was intended for only a single production at one of the major dramatic festivals at Athens.[8] At most some reference is made to the possibility of reperformance at the Attic deme festivals of Dionysus, though with lingering suspicions of the quality of plays and performers at these venues, despite clear epigraphical (and other) evidence for first-rate plays and artists.[9] But, in any case, drama is thought to be almost exclusively directed at the democratic Athenian citizen audience. Against this background, the ancient testimony that Aeschylus performed plays in Sicily and that Euripides and Agathon spent their last years working in Macedonia were (and are) acknowledged as exceptions to the rule,[10] but few doubted that fifth-century comedy was too topical and deeply rooted in its Athenian context to be exportable. The publication of a single South Italian vase twenty years ago showed how little we know about the dissemination of ancient drama. The vase depicts a moment in a stage performance of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*. This led to a reassessment of a large group of South Italian comic vase paintings (called *phlyakes*), among which several scenes long loosely "associated" with Athenian "Old Comedies" could be reevaluated as certain or probable depictions of plays by Aristophanes, Eupolis, and possibly Cratinus (the most political and topically Athenian of all Old Comic poets).[11] Because the images were probably inspired by productions in the Greek cities of Southern Italy, the discovery has led to a reassessment of the evidence for the dissemination of Athenian drama. This in turn has led to some tentative rereadings of

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[8] There is evidence of reperformance even at the Dionysia and Lenaea. See Csapo and Slater (1995, 11–14, nos. I 17–19, 22); Wagner (1995).

[9] Csapo and Slater (1995, 122, 360 no. IV 307 = *IG*^{3} 969).

[10] Plato *Symp*. 172c; Aristotle *Pol.* 1311b30–34. (For the biographical tradition: see Satyrus, *Life of Euripides* fr. 29, col. 19; *Life of Euripides* 21–25; S Ar. *Frogs* 83; Aelian *VH* 13.4.)

[11] For the vase paintings, see Green, chapter 3, above; Taplin (1993, esp. 30–47); and the reviews of Taplin (1993) by Csapo (1994) and Pöhlmann (1998).

the contents of fifth-century tragedy as expressions of Panhellenic, rather than (or in addition to) Athenocentric, values.[12]

On iconographic evidence, Attic tragedy began to be exported by the last decades, and comedy by the end, of the fifth century. For part, at least, of Aristophanes' professional life, the "production horizon" of a play extended well beyond the borders of Attica, let alone a single production at Athens. Certainly by 375, "Athenian" comedy enjoyed an international market stretching from the Black Sea to north Africa and from Sicily to Cyprus. The origins and findspots of comic artifacts and the provenances of comic poets and actors give "evidence of the increasingly Greek as opposed to simply Athenian nature of the medium."[13] By the late fourth century, tragedy and comedy had become the symbols par excellence of Greek culture, and the epithet "Athenian" is no longer justifiable.

This is not to say that the Athenian festivals were not of primary, even paramount, importance. We do not know enough about the nature of production at other centers in the classical period. But we must be aware that other significant "markets" for drama existed outside Athens at an early date and that the expansion of these may have had some impact upon drama's form and content. The growth of an international "market" for comedy might help explain some of the vast change that took place in the character of comedy from the time of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*—where Dikaiopolis justifies his address to the "Athenians," because "we are alone at the Lenaian contest and no foreigners are yet present" (504–505)—until the plots of New Comedy, which, though set in various Greek cities, are virtually timeless and placeless, give or take a few brushstrokes of "local color."

Though we know much more about production at Athens than elsewhere, our knowledge of performance is far inferior. We know almost nothing of the topography of the Athenian theater before 330, but there are substantial remains of other classical theaters in Attica and elsewhere. We have no more than five Athenian artifacts that show scenes of comedy in performance (though we have many figurines of individual comic characters), but we have more than twenty-five times that number on vases from Southern Italy. There is no evidence to suggest that comedies were modified when reperformed or exported, and I will assume that the contemporary and near-contemporary performance spaces and performance styles used in the reproduction of Athenian drama outside of

[12] Particularly Easterling (1994) and Taplin (1999).
[13] J.R. Green (1994, 68–69).

Athens were close to the conditions of performance in the Athenian theater. It is more helpful to describe a performance for which we have evidence than to insist upon a performance for which we have little or none.

b. *The Shape of the Theater*

In the last few decades, the publication of new theater sites and the reexamination of old ones has seriously challenged the cliché about production in large round theaters. Because few theaters have been scientifically excavated, and because most of the urban theaters were enlarged and rebuilt in later periods, we have little evidence for the appearance of the Greek theater building before the late fourth century. But surprising results have come from the study of the theaters that do have remains datable to the fifth century (Thorikos, Ikarion, Piraeus, Syracuse, and Argos; probably Isthmia; possibly Euonymon, Dion and Chaeroneia). These theaters are not large and round but relatively small with rectangular or trapezoidal orchestras. The earliest securely datable remains of a theater built on a circular plan are the "Lycurgan" theater at Athens (perhaps begun as early as 400 and finished ca. 330), the sanctuary theater at Epidaurus (330–320), and the theater of Megalopolis (probably well after 370).[14] The norm for the fifth century is probably best represented by the smaller theaters with trapezoidal orchestras, for some of which dramatic performances are attested from an early date (Thorikos, Syracuse, and Ikarion). Moreover, almost all the Attic deme theaters that survive (Thorikos, Ikarion, Piraeus, Rhamnous, Trachones and Oropos) originally had trapezoidal orchestras (the newly discovered fourth-century theatre at Acharnae probably had a round orchestra). Analogy suggests that the fifth-century Theater of Dionysus at Athens also had a smaller trapezoidal orchestra, and there is supporting evidence in its extant remains.[15]

If the early theaters were less large and round than generally believed, they were also considerably less monumental. Literary evidence shows that the Athenian audience sat on wooden benches that had to be erected annually for the dramatic festivals until the stone theatron was completed around the middle of the fourth century. And though the skene or "stage building" certainly existed at Athens by 458, there is no reason to suppose

[14] On the date of the "Lycurgan" theater, see Goette (1999); Csapo (2007).

[15] See Goette's essay in Pöhlmann (1995, 9–48) and Goette's appendix to Csapo (2007). The traditional view is defended by Scullion (1994) and Wiles (1997b, 23–62).

it a permanent fixture. Nothing more than stone foundations remain from any early skene, and it may well be that all stage buildings were normally rebuilt for dramatic festivals. In any case, whether removable or not, a skene constructed of wood could be quite elaborate, as are many of those we find on the South Italian vases, and it is likely that the skene at Athens resembled the South Italian skenai much more than generally supposed.[16]

c. *The Festival*

Some scholars have argued that the main Athenian dramatic festival for Dionysus, the Great Dionysia, was not instituted until after democracy was first established in Athens in 508 (and not decades earlier by the tyrant Peisistratus, as is generally believed).[17] The rapid proliferation of performances at least suggests that the new democracy found drama congenial to its needs. In 486 comedy was added to the entertainments of the Great Dionysia. Between 440 and 430, tragic and comic competitions were added to the Lenaea. During the fifth century, some villages of Attica incorporated drama into their rural festivals. By the later fourth century, an Athenian could attend at least twelve tragic and ten comic competitions every winter, but probably many more, since our knowledge of the Rural Dionysia depends mainly upon chance finds of inscriptions.[18] Despite any political interest it may have served, drama in classical Athens always formed part of the worship of Dionysus.

The dissemination of drama outside of Attica was instrumental in freeing it from the Dionysiac festival context. The theater at Syracuse, which had its own comic tradition, was in a sanctuary of Apollo. Here Aeschylus probably performed *Women of Aetna* to celebrate the foundation of the town of Aetna by Hieron: the notice in the *Life of Aeschylus* (9) does not exclude performance at a regular religious festival, although the circumstances may suggest an "occasional piece." Above all, the Macedonian kings found drama a convenient symbol of "Greek" culture, which they exploited as an instrument of policy and propaganda, directed as much at relations with their Greek neighbors as at their Macedonian subjects. The result was a further dislocation from the Dionysiac and religious sphere. Archelaus invented a festival of Zeus and the Muses, which probably

[16] Cf. Hughes (1996).
[17] See especially Connor (1989); M.L. West (1989).
[18] See Csapo and Slater (1995, 44 no. I 104, 121–138 nos. III 47–78).

served as a venue for Euripides' play about the king's ancestor, also called Archelaus (the play established a divine sanction and a respectable Argive genealogy for the Macedonian monarch).[19] Philip began the practice of celebrating military victories and royal weddings with musical and dramatic competitions. Alexander used theater to tame his rebellious Greek subjects: he drew their attention to his military success by punctuating his progress across Asia with massive musical and dramatic festivals; at the same time, he mystified the Greeks into thinking his empire was their own by advertising his cultural allegiance to Greece rather than Macedon. Dramatic competitions were incorporated into the celebration of Alexander's own wedding and funeral.

In the Hellenistic period, dramatic festivals proliferated.[20] Some were Dionysia, but most were not. Cities and cult centers promoted their interests by adding drama to festivals celebrating their patron deities (e.g., Soteria for Apollo Soter at Delphi, Asklepieia at Epidauros, even the Panathenaia at Athens). The successors of Alexander, refining his technique of statecraft, turned drama into an instrument of ruler cult by incorporating it into festivals of self-celebration (e.g., Demetreia, Ptolemaia, Antigoneia). Even the Athenian Dionysia was briefly renamed "Demetreia" in 303 to flatter Demetrius the Besieger. In Greece under the Roman Empire, dramatic festivals frequently commemorated the emperors (e.g., Hadrianeia), the Roman people (Romaia), or local benefactors (e.g., Lysimacheia at Aphrodisias, Demostheneia at Oinoanda).

It is more accurate to speak of expansion and variegation than of a simple divorce from either Dionysus or religion. Theater performers retained a special connection to Dionysus. Greek actors' guilds were called "Commonwealth of the Artists of Dionysus." Several kings and emperors thought it good politics to style themselves "the New Dionysus." The pretence of embodying the god allowed them to appropriate to their public epiphanies all the triumphal imagery of the Dionysiac procession. More importantly, it set at their direct disposal the all-powerful propaganda machinery of the local actors' guilds, to which they stood as divine patrons. So long as drama was performed at public festivals, it retained some link with divine worship: indeed, without this link drama would not have served the economic and political interests of cities and kings nearly so well. Under the Roman Empire, however, the elite owned

[19] Diodoris Siculus 17.16.3–4; Arrian 1.11.1. Harder (1985).
[20] Chaniotis (1995); Le Guen (1995, 64–65, 82–83).

their own private theaters, which were much more purely secular and ultimately eclipsed public festivals as the chief venue for the production of tragedy and comedy.

d. *Dramatic Competitions*

Performance in competition is generally regarded as a fourth distinguishing feature of ancient drama. This was certainly the rule in antiquity, and there is no warrant for the belief that reperformance was an exception. Neither Plato,[21] nor the supposed *Wanderbühne* of South Italian comic vases, supports the widespread belief in troupes of actors traveling at random, like their mediaeval counterparts, with their own stage in tow, and setting up wherever the market seemed good and the authorities lenient. With rare exceptions, reperformance regularly took place in the context of dramatic competition, even in Southern Italy.[22] Sometimes drama may have been performed at a competition, though not strictly part of that competition. Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (10–11) implies that the revivals of Aeschylus in the 420s formed part of the regular tragic competition, but fragments of the *Fasti*, an inscription recording productions at the Athenian Dionysia, strongly imply that the performance of old plays—tragedy from 386 and comedy from 339—was an event added to, yet not included in, the dramatic contest.[23] In a few cases, the inscriptions reveal that the winners of the contests were the only competitors, but this is the exception that proves the rule, since the language is careful to insist upon the formal fiction of a competition, even in its absence.[24]

Private theater was the principal venue for drama outside of competition. From as early as the third and certainly by the first century, the very

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[21] Plato *Laws* 817a–b; cf. *Laches* 183a–b. Both passages speak of travelling "tragic poets"! In *Laws* they appear to perform outside of a normal dramatic festival, but Plato's scenario is purely imaginary. Neither passage implies a noncompetitive environment (one could argue the opposite from *antagonistai* at *Laws* 817b).

[22] For performance outside a festival context, see e.g. *IG XII, 7 226*. For dramatic competitions in South Italy, see Plato *Laws* 659a–c; Hesychius s.v. *pente kritai*; Zenobius 3.64 (citing Epicharmus). For the competitive context of choral (not necessarily dramatic) contests in Gela, see Jordan (2007) and P. Wilson (2007b).

[23] *IG* II^2 2318 cols. viii, xii. Not annual until 341 (tragedy) and 311 (comedy). At that time the old dramas might have been incorporated into a competition: see Le Guen (1995, 65–66).

[24] Fictive competitions: Csapo and Slater (1995, 187, 195). W.J. Slater (1993, 189–212, 190, 199 and 2007, 34–35, 45–47). Contests in general: Le Guen (1995, 82–87), P. Wilson (2007a).

wealthy elite owned their own acting troupes and entertained guests with scenes or whole plays from (usually the classics of) tragedy and comedy performed at dinner parties in their villas and palaces. This custom derives in part from a tradition, beginning in fifth-century Athens, of singing or reciting excerpts from drama as party entertainment. Under the Roman Empire private performances of (above all) classical drama functioned as a sign that the host shared the elite cultural values suited to a gentleman of influence and power: it was a small-scale imitation of the sponsorship of drama by Hellenistic rulers. The rarer the public performances became, the more the knowledge of Euripides or Menander was restricted to the schools and entertainments of the leisure class. By the second or third century CE, such private recitations and performances had become the principal vehicle of drama's preservation.[25]

Like most discussions of the performance and production of Greek comedy, our main focus will be the Athenian theater from the time of Aristophanes to the time of Menander, but we will frequently draw upon evidence from the larger historical and geographical context, both for its own interest, and for the help it may provide in understanding the performance context of our surviving plays. A broader view of the changing history of production seems justified both by the discovery that even the plays of Aristophanes and his contemporaries were performed outside Athens in and after their own day, and by the fact that the plays of Menander and his rivals continued to be performed for another six hundred years. A broad view of production history is also necessary, because it is precisely for the Theater of Dionysus at the times of Aristophanes and Menander that our knowledge of the physical setting of dramatic performances is least good.

2. *The Performers*

The first five hundred years of the history of theater is marked by continuous expansion and unbroken success, whether measured in cultural, political, or business terms. The growth of the enterprise provided the economic basis for a process of professionalization and specialization among theater personnel. This process, however, was shaped and sometimes limited by the political and cultural institutions served by drama.

[25] On private drama, see Csapo (1999, 154–155, and forthcoming b, ch. 6) with further literature.

The evolution of the form of Greek comedy is profoundly marked by the tensions between the cultural, political, and economic interests served by the theater.

a. *The Chorus*

In the complex regulatory system of classical Athens, the chorus stood in a privileged opposition to other performers (even though the privileges might seem strange to us, based as they are on an ideology that regards working for pay as a manifestation of servitude). The choreuts were represented as volunteers who performed without remuneration as a service to their god; their upkeep, costuming, and training was financed by wealthy citizens, called choregoi (literally, "chorus leaders"), who together with their choruses competed for a purely honorific prize.[26] Actors, by contrast, were hirelings, under contract to the state, and paid a fixed fee for their service. Choreuts for the Dionysia were by law Athenian citizens, or for the Lenaia (and perhaps Rural Dionysia) citizens and resident noncitizens (metics), while the nationality of pipers or actors was a matter of indifference.[27] In official terminology, the chorus generally stood for the entire drama: a poet was said to "ask for a chorus"; the archon "granted a chorus"; at the competition, the herald invited the poet to "bring on your chorus"; the festival judges "judged the choruses" (their oath apparently enjoined them to give the prize "to the one who sang well"); the *Fasti*, possibly drawn from official records, lists the name of the choregos, as representative of the chorus, before that of the poet, and the inscription itself lists drama and dithyramb under the archaizing heading "these were the *komoi* (drunken choral processions) to Dionysus"; tragedy and comedy are commonly referred to as "the choruses of the tragedians/comedians"; official speech even considered the poet a mere adjunct of the chorus, its "teacher."[28] Athenian painted pottery and reliefs with theatrical subjects mostly depict the chorus in performance or in celebration after the performance.[29] The reliefs are probably dedications by victorious choregoi, and the representations of choruses on painted pottery may be copies

[26] P. Wilson (2000, 126–128) suspects that choreuts in fact received cash as well as payment "in kind."

[27] Csapo and Slater (1995, 349–368).

[28] See, for example, Cratinus fr. 17 Kassel-Austin; Plato *Laws* 817d; Aristophanes *Acharnians* 11, *Knights* 521, *Peace* 736, *Birds* 787, *Assembleywomen* 1160; second hypothesis to Demosthenes *Against Meidias* 4; *IG* II^2 2318.

[29] J.R. Green (1991b, 15–30).

or imitations of choregic dedications. The actors are notably absent or, if present, anonymous, while the choreuts may be identified by name.[30] This contrasts sharply with the art related to the theater produced in the South Italian cities, which seems to concentrate exclusively upon the performance of actors (though their productions probably included choruses). The chorocentric language and imagery are perhaps linked with Athenian democracy's interest in stressing the religious and participatory character of drama, since the chorus might be represented as embodying both the worshipping congregation and the citizen collective. This seems implicit in the reference to the plays as *komoi* and in the insistence on citizen volunteers.

The chorus was felt to be of relatively greater importance to comedy than to tragedy. There were twenty-four members, as opposed to the fifteen (or twelve) tragic choreuts. The relative cost of training and costuming a chorus for comedy was nearly twice that of a tragedy (on a cost-per-play reckoning), if we can trust the figures divulged by the speaker of Lysias 21.[31] Another index of the importance of the comic chorus may be the slow rate of its quantitative (and, we will see, qualitative) decline relative to tragedy, if we can generalize from the surviving plays of Aristophanes (who was probably conservative in this respect). A quantitative analysis shows that the lines given to the chorus drop gradually from about 48.5 percent in Aeschylus to only 8.5 percent in Euripides' *Orestes* (408), with a fairly sharp drop after 425. By contrast, all the extant fifth-century plays of Aristophanes, averaging 24 percent choral participation, show small variation and remain close to the pre-425 tragic average. It is not until the two fourth-century plays, *Ecclesiazusae* (ca. 392) and *Wealth* (388), that one sees a very sharp decline (even compensating for the lost choral songs). Perhaps there was a feeling that the cultic element was stronger in comedy. Certainly political comedy favored the chorus—especially that of Aristophanes, who fashioned his plots around the choral template of parodos, agon, parabasis, and komos.

Despite the official desire to establish the chorus as the core of drama, fourth-century comedy shows a growing tendency to isolate the chorus from the dramatic narrative. At the same time, the manuscripts and papyri omit several choral odes from Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* and

[30] Notably the case with the Pronomos vase: here the actors are not only nameless but faceless, since their features (and even their bodies) are those of the characters portrayed in the drama. Cf. *SEG* 23, no. 102; Csapo (forthcoming a).

[31] For estimates of private contributions to the Dionysia, see P. Wilson (2008).

Wealth, and all choral song from our extant post-Aristophanic comedy, simply marking its place with the tag, "Song of the Chorus." These facts have induced some scholars to suppose that the absence of the chorus from our texts is somehow tantamount to an absence of the chorus from performance. But there is enough *testimonia* relating to the fourth-century choregia and fourth-century productions to show that, in the time of the Athenian democracy, despite the apparent marginalization of the chorus's importance to the plot, the chorus sustained no diminution in size, cost, or importance to the comic *production*.[32] The absence of choral odes from our texts may indicate the belief on the part of some ancient editor that the songs were unnecessary or inauthentic, but is far from constituting evidence of mediocrity or halfheartedness.

All this changed with the fall of the Athenian democracy and the institution of an oligarchy under Demetrius of Phaleron in 317. Soon after Demetrius' accession, an "Overseer of the Dionysia" appears to have been created to oversee, among other things, the activities of choregoi. By the time of the restoration of the democracy in 307, if not before, both the superintendant and the choregoi were replaced by an official called the agonothetes ("Arranger of the Contests"), who paid the entire cost of the festival and its productions with a combination of public and private funds.[33] From this date the primary competition was between poets and actors, not choregoi and choruses.[34]

All the extant plays of Menander seem to postdate the changes in the choregia begun by Demetrius. Before Menander the comic chorus, though far less central to the dramatic narrative than in fifth-century comedy, had nonetheless some connection with the plot and some dialogue with the actors.[35] In Menander the chorus has neither.[36] Thus, though it is sometimes thought that the decline of the chorus occasioned the abolition of the choregia, it appears that the opposite was true: the restriction and eventual abolition of the choregia led to the near elimination of the chorus's role in the narrative, and this doubtless facilitated

[32] See esp. Rothwell (1995).

[33] See Wilson and Csapo (forthcoming).

[34] *IG* II^2 3073. Significantly, the Fasti (*IG* II^2 2318), a list of production information including names of *choregoi* and the victorious tribes in dithyramb, ceases at about 316. See Csapo and Slater, (1995, 40 no. I 100, 156–157 no. III 110).

[35] Rothwell (1995, 112–113).

[36] So far as we know, but see W.G. Arnott (1996, 834–840). A post-Demetrian date seems likely too for the other plays that give evidence of a chorus entirely or nearly entirely dissociated from the dramatic narrative—for example, Alexis' *Hairdresser* (fr. 112 Kassel-Austin).

the diminution of its importance to the production. It did so by design. Choregiai were a burden to most elites and an expensive symbol of their servitude to the democracy. Prominent and ambitious elites also had little love for the choral voice, especially in comedy where it was frequently obnoxious to their personal reputations or their collective interests. But there were also positive reasons for the creation of the agonothesia. It put total control of the dramatic festivals, and their contents, into the hands of the wealthiest few. As Demetrius' teacher, Aristotle, put it,

> liturgies should be attached to the chief magistracies … so that the common people will gladly have no part in them and show indulgence to those in office, who pay a great deal for the privilege; it is appropriate, upon entering into office, to offer magnificent sacrifices and undertake some public works, so that the commoners will be glad to see the [oligarchic] constitution remain in place.[37]

It may be that dramatic choruses in Athens after 307 made freer use of professional choreuts—other Hellenistic festivals were highly variable, sometimes using professional and sometimes citizen choreuts.[38] Roman New Comedy entirely eliminated the choral breaks from the drama or replaced them with interludes of pipe music. In doing so it may simply have observed a variety of contemporary Greek practice. At more ambitious or formal festivals, however, comic (and tragic) choruses continued to exist, and choral drama may even have experienced something of a revival in Roman times: comic choruses are specifically attested by late Hellenistic inscriptions and, for Ephesus in the second century CE, by Aelius Aristides, but the only evidence for their size, from the inscriptions recording contestants at the Delphic Soteria of 256 and 135, sets numbers at seven and four choreuts, respectively.[39] Much less is heard of tragic choreuts.[40]

b. *The Poet*

In classical Athens the official persona of the poet appears as something of a middle term in the opposition between chorus and actors. In the language of the fifth-century theater, he is generally referred to as the

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[37] Arist. *Politics* 1321a31–35.

[38] P. Wilson (2000, 289–301, 308–309).

[39] Csapo and Slater, (1995, 202, 357, nos. III 165A and B, IV 293); Aristides, *Against Comic Mockery* 14, 28, and the discussion by Jones (1993, 29–52); P. Wilson (2000, 308–309). Revival: P. Wilson, (2000, 383, n. 58).

[40] *Tragikoi* are attested only at Tanagra (*SEG* 19.335).

chorus's "teacher" (didaskalos), as if a mere adjunct to its performance. Yet we are told that from the earliest times, the poet also took the role of lead actor, a practice first abandoned by Sophocles "because he had a weak voice," but which may have lingered longer in comedy.[41] Indeed, many believe that Aristophanes himself played the leading role in *Acharnians*.[42] The poet's rewards were, probably from the beginning, both honorific, like those of the chorus, and financial, like those of the actor: in fact, the receipt of his prize, a crown of ivy, was entirely dependent on the success of his chorus; but at the same time, he appears to have received a sizeable fee from the state, regardless of (though possibly scaled to) the placement of his chorus in the competition.[43] The fee for a tragedian at the Dionysia has been estimated at six thousand drachmas (a drachma was the average daily wage).[44] Like the actor, the poet's nationality was indifferent, though until the second quarter of the fourth century, most were well-to-do Athenians. Writing plays and acting tended to be a family businesses (like other theatrical specializations), and both professions were frequently practiced by the same families.[45] Actors, writers, and choreuts might all be called *komoidoi* or *tragoidoi*, but strict boundaries separated the comic from the tragic genre: we have no instance of an actor who performed both tragedy and comedy before the first century, no instance at all of a poet writing both genres, nor even any sure instance of both genres being shared by a single family.[46]

c. *The Actor*

The prize for tragic actors did not appear at the Dionysia until 449, and the prize for comic actors until between 328 and 312; at the Lenaea, however, both tragic and comic actors' contests began around 432.[47] Artifacts also suggest that popular recognition of the contribution of actors came relatively slowly and late: depictions of actors began only around the 420s, seventy years after the earliest certain depictions of dramatic choruses. An inscription suggests that in the fourth century, there was also an actor's prize in both tragedy and comedy at Thorikos and doubt-

[41] Csapo and Slater (1995, 225 no. IV 4–6).
[42] See esp. Sutton (1988).
[43] P. Wilson (2000, 64–65; 2008, 100–105); Bremer (1991, 54–57).
[44] Bremer (1991, 56).
[45] Sutton (1987); Chaniotis (1990 [1994], esp. 94–95, 106–108).
[46] Seidensticker (1982, 15–16); Sutton (1987, 10).
[47] Csapo and Slater (1995, 40–41 no. I 100, 133–134 no. III 68, 226–228 nos. IV 11–14).

less other Rural Dionysia.[48] By contrast, the lateness of the introduction of a contest for comic actors at the City Dionysia is remarkable. At a guess, the Athenian democracy attempted to maintain the fiction that the comic chorus was here still the heart of the performance, long after the actors had stolen the spotlight in tragedy and at the Lenaea. The civic identity of the chorus was relatively more prominent in comedy than in tragedy, and more important at the Dionysia than the Lenaea, because the Dionysia was the international festival at which Athens presented itself to the rest of Greece. The reluctance to admit an actor's prize can be compared with the reluctance to admit noncitizen choregoi and choreuts at this festival.

The actors' popular appeal surpassed that of the chorus by the beginning of the fourth century. The change is attested not only by the artifacts, which now focus on the actors to the near total exclusion of the chorus, but also by changes in the form of comedy and the apparently easy detachability of choral songs. Aristotle tells us that in his day (ca. 330), "in the theater the actors are now more important than the poets" (*Rhetoric* 1403b 33). The lead actors were indeed so prominent that the old system of allotting actors to poets had to be changed to prevent the actor's popularity from determining the prize for the production as well as the prize for the actor. By 341 the Archon Eponymous began to allot different protagonists to each individual play of a tragic trilogy.

This growth in the importance of the actor is in part a reflection of not only his growing professionalism but also the vast expansion of the market for drama by the late fifth century. Many of the most illustrious actors of the fourth century were non-Athenians: the comic actor Satyrus of Olynthus, for example, or the tragedians Aristodemos of Metapontum and Neoptolemos of Skyros, whose careers all began in or near the 370s. By the middle of the fourth century, actors were traveling extensively. Their profession and their connection with Dionysus generally allowed them safe passage through war-torn Greece, where ordinary citizens entering enemy territory could be seized and ransomed. For this reason, and because of their fame, charm and rhetorical skills, monarchs and cities frequently employed actors in delicate or secret negotiations.[49] In Greece the demand for theater grew so rapidly that by the 340s, cities, no matter how prestigious their festivals, were obliged to give actors large deposits in order to ensure their appearance at an engagement

[48] Thorikos VIII no. 76, IX no. 84.
[49] Csapo and Slater (1995, 232–236 nos. IV 30A–31B).

and to threaten the actors (or their guarantors) with fines amounting to twice the value of the deposit.[50] Sometime in the 330s, the tragedian Athenodoros was fined for failing to appear at the Athenian Dionysia.[51] The demand for actors increased exponentially after the rapid conquest of Asia by Alexander. Alexander and his successors were keen patrons of the theater, not least because they knew its propaganda value. Their subjects were even keener. Theater was the symbol par excellence of Greek culture, and Greek culture was the prerequisite for economic and social advancement in the new Hellenistic kingdoms.

Demand for actors increased vastly in the fourth century. Over the century the income of top actors rose from large to legendary: Theodorus, the most famous tragic actor of the day, was able to make a contribution to the rebuilding of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi four times larger than that contributed by any other private individual; Neoptolemos was wealthy enough to lavish his money on public works in Athens in exchange for public honors; more anecdotal evidence mentions royal gifts of ten talents given by Alexander to the comic actor Lykon, or the wage of a talent earned by the late fourth-century tragic actors Aristodemus and Polos for a single appearance.[52] The latter probably refers to "appearance fees," quite independent of prizes, paid by cities to ensure the presence of top performers at their festivals. Polos' fees were proverbially large: Dio Chrysostom (Or. 66.11) inflates the cost of an appearance of "a Polos" or an Olympic victor to five talents. In fact, epigraphic evidence shows that Polos charged more than the medium-sized state of Samos could afford in 306 when it struggled to celebrate, with due magnificence, a festival in honor of its new kings, Antigonos and Demetrius.[53] Samos heaped fulsome honors upon the prima donna because he agreed to take lower-than-usual fees and defer payment in exchange for all box-office proceeds.

It is little wonder, then, that in this climate actors were able to band together to form the world's first international trade unions. The "Artists

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[50] Csapo and Slater (1995, 234–236 nos. IV 30F–G and 31C, 198 no. III 162, 119 no. III 40).

[51] Plut. *Alexander* 29, *On Alexander's Luck* 334e.

[52] Actor's income: *FD* III 5.3.67; Demosthenes 5.8, 18.114; Aul. Gell. 11.9.2; [Plutarch] *Ten Orators* 848b. The last two are the same anecdote with different names, which goes back at least to the second-century peripatetic Critolaus (fr. 33 Wehrli; cf. Aul. Gell. 11.10.6). Ordinary actors, of course, made more modest salaries: Le Guen (1995, 72–73). For Hellenistic and Roman times: Chaniotis (1995, 95–96), with further literature.

[53] Csapo and Slater (1995, 242 no. IV 37).

of Dionysus" were divided into different guilds with semipermanent headquarters in several Hellenistic kingdoms.[54] The guilds were organized, and behaved, as if they were independent states passing their own laws, issuing their own coinage, and electing archons, *prytaneis*, chief priests, secretaries, finance ministers, official delegates to the major festivals, and even ambassadors to negotiate with states desiring their services. They negotiated such privileges for their members as safe passage, tax exemptions, freedom from arrest, front-row seating in the theater, and the right to strut about publicly in purple robes and gold crowns. Theater people of every description (directors, contractors, costumiers, mask makers) soon swelled their ranks, as eventually did musicians and even performers with no connection to Dionysus whatsoever.

d. *Other Theater Professions*

The growth of other theatrical specializations further severed the poet's connection with the performance of his plays. Professional *chorodidaskaloi* and others took over their function of training the chorus. This process begins as early as Aristophanes, who left the direction of many of his plays to Kallistratos and Philonides. Pipers also acquired higher professional standards, and consequently greater fame and greater license to display their virtuosity and creativity: many pipers were also composers. The actors developed musical skills which eclipsed those of the amateur chorus. The raising of the musical standard of drama put pressure on the poets to increase the proportion of actor's monody, or of mixed actors' and choral song over purely choral song, a phenomenon increasingly evident in plays produced after 420. Some dramatists, like Euripides, embraced a freer and much more ambitious style of composition, which rivaled the musical experiments of dithyrambic poets.[55] Aristophanic monody frequently imitates and parodies this "New Music."

Originally, the piper was paid by the poet, but by the late fifth century, by the state or by the choregos.[56] Pipers' names appear only rarely on fifth-century choregic inscriptions in Athens, but commonly in the fourth century, when the name may be listed before the poet, and in Hellenistic

[54] Csapo and Slater (1995, 239–255, esp. 242–243, IV 37); Le Guen (2001); Aneziri (2003).

[55] Csapo (1999–2000, 399–426); Csapo (2004).

[56] P. Wilson (2000, 69). Other musicians, and even additional pipers, might be hired by the choregos. Quite exceptionally for Greek dramatic performers, some of these extra pipers were possibly female: see Taplin (1993, 70–78, 105–109).

times, even before the actors.[57] The famous piper Pronomos is at the center of the cast portrait on an Attic vase painting of ca. 400, which probably copies a votive painting commemorating a dramatic victory.[58] In ca. 290 a piper earned 4,800 drachmas for playing at two minor dramatic festivals in Euboea, receiving 50 percent more pay than even a comic actor.[59]

By Hellenistic times show business grew to support a vast array of specializations (we know of 151), most of which required training from earliest childhood.[60]

e. *The Audience*

Recent scholarship has stressed the importance of the spectators' contribution to the dramatic performance.[61] For ancient theater, the topic is particularly important, since audience participation was probably greater than in any subsequent drama, and greater still in comedy than in tragedy or satyr play.[62]

Drama is often distinguished from ritual by its segregation of performers from a (nonparticipatory) audience. On this criterion, ancient drama, though unquestionably "drama," is far closer to ritual than its modern congeners.[63] There are at least three different contexts in which one can discuss the participation of the ancient audience: the political and social context of the public gathering, the context of the festival competition, and the context of public worship.

Greek theaters were the largest places in which local populations could gather. The Theater of Dionysus at Athens probably never seated more than an estimated 7 percent of the population of Attica. Some recent estimates of audience size for the fifth-century BCE theater are even as low as 2 percent of the population. Nevertheless, the theater was probably more capacious than the democratic Assembly on the Pnyx hill even before the fourth-century expansion, and a good two-and-a-half times

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[57] P. Wilson (2000, 214–215). The piper's name also appears before the *didaskalos* in *SIG*^{3} 424A (cf. *OGIS* 51) and before the actors in the didascaliae of Terence's *Hecyra*.

[58] Naples *MN* 3240 = Csapo and Slater (1995, 69–70 no. I 137 and pl. 8).

[59] Csapo and Slater (1995, 197 no. III 162).

[60] Chaniotis (1995).

[61] In general, see Blau (1990); Gruber (1986). For ancient drama see J.J. Henderson (1990); Redfield (1990); Dedoussi (1995); Wallace (1997); Revermann (2006b); Roselli (forthcoming).

[62] Taplin (1986).

[63] See, for example, Brask and Morgan (1988).

more capacious than the Pnyx afterwards. These percentages are of total capacity at any moment and not, of course, a total figure for the attendance at any dramatic festival, since there is no reason to believe, as scholars often do, that each individual spectator attended the whole festival or even all the events of a particular day. Compared to the assembly, the theater audience was also more representative of the resident population, including children, slaves, metics, and probably women.[64] There is a tendency, however, to exaggerate just how representative the theater audience in fact was. Not-inconsiderable entrance fees of two obols were charged (roughly a full day's wages), probably for each day of the festival, and this would certainly exclude most slaves, and—despite the existence (perhaps only in the fourth century) of a public subsidy for citizens, called the "festival money" (*theorikon*)—there was no compulsion to spend it on entertainment, and many of the poor no doubt had more pressing needs.[65]

The Great Dionysia also included foreign visitors. For these reasons the Athenian theater became an important site for the negotiation of foreign and domestic relations of power. A functional similarity between the Assembly, law courts, and the theater gave Athenian drama its peculiarly rhetorical cast. Recent scholarship has paid close attention to the theater's role in propagating (usually imperial or patriarchal) values and in representing the community to the outside world and to itself, both in the ceremonials preceding the dramatic performance and in the dramas.[66] In Hellenistic and Roman times, when drama generally shied from overt political engagement, the political function of the theatrical event greatly increased.[67] Theater and games were the only place where the population at large could make its feelings known to its kings or emperors or where the kings and emperors might increase their popularity and consolidate their power. The public performances of the emperor and the audience were often no less scripted and rehearsed than those on stage. Rulers took a serious interest in using the theater and the techniques of theatrical

[64] For the dispute about the presence of women, see J.J. Henderson (1991b) and Goldhill (1994). There is no doubt of women in the audience in Rome from the earliest times, in Magna Graecia and mainland Greece by the early first century, and in the Athens of imperial times: see Rawson (1987).

[65] See the discussions by Sommerstein (1997a) and P. Wilson (1997).

[66] For tragedy, see, for example, Winkler (1990) and Goldhill (1990). For comedy, see Henderson (1993a); Carey (1994).

[67] For Hellenistic and imperial theater politics, see esp. Chaniotis (1997); André (1990); W.J. Slater (1995).

production to enhance their popular image. This began as early as Demetrius the Besieger (336–283), who wore theatrical garments and who carefully staged his public appearances in Athens, particularly when, after recapturing the city in 294, he met the population in the Theater of Dionysus and made a great impression by descending to the stage from the upper side entrance like a god in a tragedy.

Political contests were never entirely divorced from the dramatic contests, and especially not in the case of Athenian comedy. Comic performers frequently exploited political and social rivalries to win audience support in their bid for first prize. Though in Athens a panel of judges made the ultimate decision, judges were expected or, according to some ancient sources, "obliged" to respect the will of the crowd—we even hear of judges being fined for "incorrect judgement."[68] Aristophanes' comedies are filled with appeals for support to the crowd and threats and admonitions to the judges (Menander's appeals appear only at the very end). Menander's avoidance of allusion to current politics is often, and probably correctly, related to the restriction of the franchise to the wealthier class of Athenians and the muting (through exile and intimidation) of the democratic faction in the audience. But, even in Menander's day, political comedies—indeed, bitterly partisan comedies—were performed, the best example being Philippides' comedy of ca. 300, which violently ridicules Demetrius the Besieger and his Athenian supporter, the democrat Stratocles. One could be, like most comic poets, conservative, even antidemocratic, and still win over the majority of the audience. Timing, of course, was very important: Philippides produced at a time of restored democracy, but just before the reestablishment of a restricted "moderate democracy" at Athens; Aristophanes' *Frogs* won first prize and, according to Dicaearchus, was especially honored for its parabasis, which pleaded for reconciliation with the oligarchs and antidemocrats exiled after the failure of the coup in 411 BCE and anticipated the general mood, as shown by the subsequent recall of these exiles. Under Athenian democracy a comic poet could win popularity by taking political risks so long as he judged the mood of his audience correctly. (It helped, too, if, like Aristophanes, one usually spoke out of both sides of one's mouth.)

For these reasons the poets and performers of comedy, especially Old Comedy, encouraged a high degree of audience participation. They did this through frequent address to the audience, even abuse of members of

[68] Csapo and Slater (1995, 157–165); Aeschines 3.232.

the audience, or the physical inclusion of prominent Athenians as characters in the plays. Audience address is especially frequent in prologues, longer speeches, and incidental jokes—as in *Frogs* 275, where Xanthias, asked if he saw the father beaters and perjurers of Hades, points to the audience, and Dionysus replies, "Oh yes, now I see them too." But the most energetic appeals to the audience are in the choral odes, especially the parabasis (see part 4). The high degree of audience participation in Old Comedy has inspired serious doubts about the utility of the concept of dramatic "illusion": the world of the dramatic fiction merges easily with the reality of the civic festival competition.

Both the religious and the political context of Athenian drama encouraged a high degree of audience participation. The state's strict regulation of the composition of the chorus seems chiefly aimed at ensuring its survival as a representative, citizen body, performing not for money, but for Dionysus. Since Schlegel, the chorus has commonly been conceived of historically as a relic of drama's ritual past, but functionally as an ideal mediator between the fictional world of the actors and the real world of the audience.[69] Both aspects are particularly clear in the comic parabasis, with its extraordinary combination of direct address to the audience on political and social issues and appeals for support in the festival competition, all abruptly punctuated by often quite solemn hymns to the gods. The dramatic texts make it clear that the mediating role of the chorus is in large part attributable to its embodiment of a collective voice of traditional communal wisdom. The study of performance adds an important and often neglected material basis to the chorus's claim upon audience sympathy: it was composed of friends and relatives of an audience that itself had opportunity to perform similar service at past festivals. Direct familiarity with the chorus, both as individuals and as an institution, enabled the audience to respond as "insiders" to its performance.[70] Not coincidentally, this special relationship between chorus and audience was reinforced by laws imposing heavy fines on any choregos who admitted foreigners into his chorus. If Aristophanes was reluctant to reduce the role of the chorus after the model of contemporary tragedy and less political comedy, it was probably because he found the chorus ideally placed for winning the audience sympathy.

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[69] The theory of audience identification with the tragic chorus has been challenged by Gould (1996), but see the more moderate articulation of the audience-chorus relationship by Mastronarde (1998).

[70] See esp. Revermann (2006b).

This special participatory character of comedy declines sharply in the time (and especially in the plays) of Menander. The defeat of the Greek revolt in 322 led to direct intervention by Macedon into Athenian affairs. Antipater, the Macedonian viceroy, blamed the democracy for the revolt and instituted changes to the constitution that altered the composition of both theater audience and chorus. The poorest Athenians were exiled or disenfranchised in 322 and 317.[71] An oligarchy was set up under Demetrius (317–307). A further blow to the lower class's physical (and moral) domination of the audience came when the new regime abolished the "festival dole" (*theorikon*), which had subsidized the cost of admission from perhaps as early as the mid-fifth century.[72] Finally, as mentioned above, Demetrius began a process that ended in the abolition of the choregia, bringing the direct participation of ordinary citizens in the drama to an end.

3. *The Performance Space*

Most Greek theaters represent a combination of sacred and civic space, as they do a combination of sacred and civic functions, though not all in the same proportion. The Theater of Dionysus at Athens, as the name implies, was attached to the sanctuary of Dionysus to the south, but was separated from the temple precinct and the temple altar by a three-meter drop immediately behind the stage building. The Sanctuary of Dionysus is also atypically placed near the heart of the city, on the very slope of the acropolis. Its nearest architectural parallels are with the most important civic building, the democratic Assembly on the Pnyx. Indeed, the Athenian Assembly sometimes met in the theater during the classical period, and it regularly did so after about 300. Elsewhere, Greek theaters frequently doubled as legislatures.[73]

a. *The Orchestra*

The mediating role of the chorus is concretely represented in the topography of the Greek theater. The *orchestra*, in which the chorus sang and danced, is centrally located as a flat plane from which the theatron, or seating area for the audience, rises on one side, and the skene, or "stage

[71] Csapo and Slater (1995, 287–289, 293–297 nos. IV 134–142).
[72] Roselli (2009).
[73] Kolb (1981); Hanson (1991, 128–129).

building," rises on the other. For a long time, scholars believed that the theater evolved from a large circular dancing area in which the community performed dithyrambs (hymn accompanied by circular dances in honor of Dionysus) around an altar and that this circle gradually shrank, with the encroachments of an ever-expanding skene, until it was reduced to the semicircle familiar from most Hellenistic and Roman theaters. In this way architectural history reflected the dwindling importance of the chorus and of the ritual function of drama. It is still often supposed that the orchestra ceased to be used altogether, perhaps as early as the time of New Comedy. This view is excessively schematic.

Though the early theaters are generally connected with sanctuaries, there is nothing to suggest that drama took over a space originally designed for dithyramb or some other cultic dance. Our earliest theaters (Thorikos, Athens) were built in or after the very late sixth century, about the time when the tragic competitions in Athens were instituted. (The Sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus may not be much older.) Athens probably instituted the dithyrambic competitions at the same time as the tragic. Moreover, the rectangular form of the earliest orchestras sooner suggests that they were designed not for dithyramb, but primarily for the smaller, and usually rectangular choruses of drama. The location in each sanctuary of principal altars outside the theater indicates a further dislocation between drama and cultic dance. However, the play texts and iconography indicate the presence of an altar in the orchestra of the Theater of Dionysus, probably in the center, and this altar was doubtless the site of the ritual libations and purificatory sacrifices that preceded the dramatic competitions and possibly also served as the focal point of dithyrambic performance.[74] There is, then, no evidence for the dramatic chorus's adaptation to a space designed for cultic dance. For all we know, it worked the other way around: dithyramb may have undergone adjustments to fit a space designed for drama.

b. *The Skene*

The Greek word for the stage building, skene, originally meant "tent" or "hut" and was normally used with reference to temporary construction. The meaning of "stage buildings" is first attested in Aristophanes, who uses the word in the plural, skenai, which commentators have found "surprising"—some suppose that the plural "may refer to different

[74] Wiles (1997b, 69–86), with further literature.

constructions present on different occasions."[75] The name itself implies that the stage building was originally a structure that could be dismantled after use. The Theater of Dionysus at Athens was almost entirely built of wood before the construction of a stone theater completed in the time of Lycurgus (338–326). Like the seats in the auditorium, the stage buildings were probably regularly rebuilt, possibly only for the duration of the festivals. There is little justification, then, for supposing that, because they look temporary, the stage buildings depicted on South Italian pottery are of a different species altogether from those at Athens, and none at all for supposing that, because the stages are variously represented, the paintings must depict portable stages used by traveling hacks, and not the stages in the theaters of Tarentum or Syracuse.[76]

Even the Lycurgan theater probably used a wooden stage building, though the theatron was entirely built of stone, doubtless to allow for greater flexibility in dismantling and redesigning the acting space. All that remains of the Lycurgan stage building is a line of stone foundations (called "H-H") at the back with slots designed to receive large upright beams, and a small central platform in the center (called "T"), which probably supported the skene's central door.[77] The remains of *skenothekai* (buildings for storing the facades of used stage buildings) found at the theaters of Megalopolis and Sparta suggest a regular practice of dismantling and reconstructing the stage building elsewhere in the later classical and Hellenistic periods.[78] Frequent rebuilding of the skene is attested in the Delian inscriptions before the construction of a permanent stone skene in 274.[79] At any rate, we have written testimony that on 25 May 415 BCE, at Athens, two months after the Dionysia, the stage building had been completely dismantled, since one Diocleides, hidden by the propylaea of the Sanctuary of Dionysus, observed the movements of conspirators in the orchestra of the theater. This would not have been possible if the stage building had been in place.[80]

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[75] Ar. *Peace* 731, with Platnauer ad loc.

[76] See esp. Hughes (1996).

[77] See most recently Goette (1994, 22–23). Despite lingering controversy, there appears to be a growing consensus in favor of a Lycurgan dating for the H-H and the related stoa in the Sanctuary of Dionysus. The dating is based on the use of *breccia* foundations and reinforced by stratigraphic evidence redating the New Temple of Dionysus (which also has *breccia* foundations) to the mid-fourth century: for the literature, see J.R. Green (1989, 19–20).

[78] Moretti (1999–2000, 397).

[79] Hellmann (1992, 373–375).

[80] Andocides, *On the Mysteries* 38; Moretti (1999–2000).

Our dramatic texts assume the existence of the skene from 458 onwards.[81] The evidence of our plays strongly suggests a one-story building with a flat roof: *Assemblywomen* 884–975 implies an upper story, but the second-story window might have been supplied by a temporary panel, or indeed by the audience's imagination encouraged by the language of the actors (perhaps the case also in the comic Plato's *Poet* where an actor says with marked redundancy, "do you see the upper second story").[82] South Italian vases sometimes show women at lower-story windows that are evidently to be imagined as upper-story windows, since comic actors sometimes approach them with ladders. Alternatively, the problem may have been resolved by illusionistic perspective painting on the skene wall, which is attested by Aristotle and later tradition (though some suspect that Poetics 1449a18–19 is a later interpolation).[83]

Some maintain that the skene needed only one door, but scenes such as the opening of *Clouds* (esp. 91–92, 125) and the penultimate scene of *Assemblywomen* (877–1111) would be extremely clumsy without at least two. Three are in fact attested by the prologue of Eupolis' *Autolykos*, where the prologist tells us (much as in Menander's *Dyskolos*) that "they live here in three huts, each with his own dwelling."[84] The problem is easily solved if we suppose that the facade of the classical Athenian stage building, like that of Hellenistic stage buildings, could be quickly and easily adjusted to suit the needs of any particular performance.[85]

From 400 onwards South Italian vases regularly show a low stage, rising roughly a meter above orchestra level in front of the skene building. Since it can now be shown that many of these vases depict the performance of Old Comedy from Athens, it is no longer easy to maintain that they depict a different performance environment from that assumed by the plays. The same low stage appears in the depiction of a dramatic performance on an Attic *chous* (winejug) of ca. 420.[86] Indeed, the language of the comic texts sometimes shows the actors rising above, or descending to, orchestra level.[87] The texts and vase paintings show that extra fixtures

[81] And possibly before: see Bees (1995).
[82] Mastronarde (1990, 254–258).
[83] A full discussion of *skenographia* in Rouveret (1989, 65–127).
[84] Eupolis, fr. 48 Kassel-Austin; Dover (1966). Some scholars argue only one door, for example, Thiercy (1986, 19–89).
[85] Moretti (1995).
[86] Athens NM, Vlastos Collection (= *ARV*^{2} 1215,1; Addenda 348); Csapo and Slater (1995, 64–65 I 131, pl. 4B); Hughes (2006).
[87] Esp. *Knights* 148–149, *Wasps* 1341–1344. See Scully (1999, 68–74).

might appear, if needed, on the low stage or upon the skene—such as windows, porches in front of the door, an icon of Apollo beside the door, or a movable altar.[88]

The *ekkyklema* ("out-roller") was probably a simple large platform on wheels which could be pushed onto the stage from the skene's central door. Tragedy used the device to present interior scenes, particularly tableaux of murder victims, as if seen through the open doors. Comedy uses the device primarily in paratragic scenes, but more freely because of the greater fluidity of the distinction between exterior and interior space on the comic stage. The comic *ekkyklema* introduces pompous or larger-than-life characters with mock-tragic solemnity.[89] The first extant use of the device parodies tragic practice and particularly the spatial ambivalence of its exterior interiority. When Dicaeopolis visits Euripides in *Acharnians*, Euripides' doorkeeper tells Dicaeopolis that Euripides is "inside and not inside," and not to be seen. There follows a direct exchange between Dicaeopolis and Euripides. "I'm busy." "But have yourself rolled out." "Impossible!" "But do it anyway!" "Alright, I'll have myself rolled out, but I've no time to come down." At this point Euripides does the "impossible," emerging from the house without leaving his couch. Agathon also makes an epiphany on the *ekkyklema* in *Thesmophoriazusae*, again using the technical vocabulary of being rolled out and in. The *ekkyklema* may have been used for the epiphany of the goddess in *Peace*, and possibly for the epiphany of the rejuvenated Demos in *Knights* (1316–1336). Much disputed is the scholiast's claim that the *ekkyklema* was used to reveal the interior of Socrates' Thinkery in *Clouds*: this is more like the tragic use for "interior" tableaux, although here, instead of the usual corpses one saw the pale, half-dead students of Pheidippides' description.[90]

By about 435 the skene of the Theater of Dionysus was also equipped with a large crane, called the *mechane* (machine), which was principally (and frequently) used in tragedy for the sudden airborne entrances of divinities or the magical transportation of heroes, such as Euripides' Medea in a winged chariot, or his Bellerophon on a winged horse, or Perseus on winged sandals in his *Andromeda*.[91] The comic *mechane* is

[88] P.D. Arnott (1962); Dearden (1976).

[89] Hölscher (1994).

[90] Revermann (2006a, 185–187). Revermann's should be the first book consulted on all matters of Aristophanic staging.

[91] Excellent discussion by Mastronarde (1990).

regularly paratragic: it is used for the arrival of Iris in Aristophanes' *Birds*, of Dionysus in the prologue of Strattis' *Phoenician Women*, of Perseus in Cratinus' *Seriphians*, or, most famously, Aristophanes' parody of *Bellerophon* in *Peace*, where Trygaios ascends to heaven on a dung beetle. The *mechane* was also used in the grotesquely magnificent entrance of Socrates suspended from a basket in the original production of *Clouds*, an exception that proves the rule that this device, like the *ekkyklema*, was primarily associated with the flying entries and exits of tragic gods and heroes. The *mechane* probably consisted of a large swing beam fixed on a pivot located behind the skene and fitted with a rope, which could be lengthened or shortened by a winch and to which one hooked the actors or their various mounts.[92]

Some dozen theaters have an underground tunnel from inside the skene to the center of the orchestra.[93] Most are datable to the later fourth or early third centuries and, in the case of Syracuse, possibly to the fifth. Pollux (4.132) calls such passageways "Charon's steps." They were used for actors' epiphanies in the orchestra as if emerging from underground. Given our very fragmentary knowledge of the remains of the early Theater of Dionysus, the absence of evidence for Charon's steps is not tantamount to evidence of absence. Apart from its prevalence in later theaters, the strongest argument for Charon's steps in classical Athens is the popularity of scenes of ghosts and chthonic deities rising out of the ground in fifth-century drama and art inspired by the theater.[94] But the literary and artistic remains show that epiphanies from underground were more characteristic of tragedy and satyr play than comedy. Extant comedy has no obvious or likely uses for the device.

Unlike the chorus, which was confined to the orchestra (except for rare exits or entrances through the skene door), the actors ranged freely over skene and orchestra, even occupying the air above and, possibly, the ground beneath, making free use of the "interior" space of the skene (that can be revealed by windows or the *ekkyklema*), as well as the skene roof. Even the theatron (auditorium) was not entirely exempt from the actors' incursions. Earlier, we noted the degree to which the audience were incorporated into the performance. In comedy this often went beyond pointing at and naming members of the audience. The tossing of nuts

[92] Mastronarde (1990, 290–294). Attempt at reconstruction by Lendle (1995).

[93] Eretria, Sikyon, Corinth, Argos, Segesta, Philippi, Magnesia, Syracuse, Tralles, Erythrai, Metapontum, possibly Dion.

[94] Taplin (1977, 447–448).

and figs to the audience by the actors was a clichéd ploy for winning their approval. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* (297), Dionysus is so frightened by the monsters in Hades that he runs for protection to the priest of Dionysus in the front center of the auditorium.[95] In *Peace* (887–908), Trygaios takes Festival into the part of the auditorium reserved for the council and leaves the goddess (probably played by a naked prostitute) with the council members for the duration of the play. An opposite movement, in which the audience join the chorus, is represented in the exodos. Comedies frequently end with invitations to the audience to come and join the chorus and actors at a victory feast in the sanctuary of Dionysus just below the theater. This cannot of course literally happen, since the judging has not yet taken place, but it anticipates the moment when the audience could pour into the orchestra to follow the victory procession down the side entrances and into the sanctuary to receive some share of the choregos' victory feast. In Plato's *Symposium*, at any rate, when "Agathon and the choreuts made the victory sacrifice," Plato speaks (173a, 174a) of the presence of a mob including most of Agathon's dinner guests next day, who had nothing to do with the production.

c. *The Theatron*

Originally perhaps the only structure in the theater, the theatron ("viewing place") was notionally the most important and gave its name to the theater as a whole. Until the "Lycurgan" rebuilding, the Athenian theatron consisted of wooden benches, seating between five and ten thousand and built upon the roughly terraced south slope of the acropolis. Before the building of permanent *theatra* in stone, it was probably customary to rebuild the wooden benches for each festival season, evidently to keep valuable wood in circulation, to preserve the wood from weathering, especially under the hot summer sun, and doubtless to protect it from thieves and vandals.[96]

The evidence for the distribution of seating comes partly from inscriptions and largely from comic references to the audience in comedy, such as priest of Dionysus and the council members in the action of *Frogs* and *Peace* (mentioned above).[97] The benches were perhaps built in several

[95] Thiercy (1986, 142–143) argues for the placement of the chorus of *Peace*, before its entrance, in the front rows of the theatron.

[96] Such appears to be the case at Piraeus: *IG* II^2 1176, lines 18–20. See Csapo (2007).

[97] Csapo and Slater (1995, 298–300).

blocks with passageways in between.[98] Some blocks were reserved for members of the council and for young men doing their military training (ephebes). All ancient Greek theaters had privileged seating in the front rows, called *prohedria* ("front seating," used of both the seats and the right to sit in them). If we can infer anything from the term "first wood" (*proton xylon*), the *prohedria* in Athens was originally just the first bench. But by 420 the *prohedria* consisted of one or more rows of inscribed stone blocks that supported elegant wooden easy-chairs with backs (but no armrests) called *klismoi*. We can see the chairs preserved on an Attic vase of about 420.[99] The "Lycurgan" *prohedria* imitated the form of the *klismos* in stone (to which an armrest and footrest were added for the seat of the priest of Dionysus). Inscriptions name the office of the priests, generals, and state officials granted the privilege of front-row seating. *Prohedria* was also granted to foreign ambassadors, war orphans, athletic victors, benefactors of the state, and eventually all artists of Dionysus.

d. *The Hellenistic Theater*

So long as the theater was of wood and required frequent dismantling, it could not practically be assembled except in rectangular or trapezoidal form. But the attractions of round theaters were many—they were architecturally more impressive, had better sightlines and acoustics, and held more spectators (the "Lycurgan" theater held over fifteen thousand)—and by the end of the fourth century, large round stone theaters were the norm. The responsibility for the assemblage and maintenance of the smaller wooden theater at Athens rested upon contractors called "theatron buyers" (*theatronai*) or "theatron sellers" (*theatropolai*). But the city took a more direct interest in the upkeep of its stone theater: by 348 it appointed, and by 270 elected, an official called the "architect."[100] The theater building itself had become part of the spectacle in a larger competition for international prestige and its maintenance a matter of public concern.

The *proskenion* also appears to be an innovation of the late fourth century. It consisted of a one-story building with a flat roof built in front (and sometimes to either side) of the (now) two-story skene building. In

[98] The word *kerkis* (literally, shuttle) suggests a tapered block and is first used for a wedge of theater seats by Alexis (fr. 42 Kassel-Austin). The term seems to imply the round theatron of the Lycurgan theater.

[99] Vlastos Collection, Athens. See Csapo and Slater (1995, 64–65 no. I 131).

[100] Csapo (2007, 108–113).

this way the second story of the skene served as a backdrop to the roof of the *proskenion*. The average Hellenistic theater thus offered in theory four possible acting spaces: the orchestra, the space immediately in front of and within the portico of the *proskenion*, the roof of the *proskenion*, and the roof of the skene.

It has long been assumed that the new architectural form implied a removal of the acting area to the *proskenion* roof, now close to three meters above orchestra level. Such an arrangement would have precluded any interaction between the chorus and the actors. As later fourth-century comedy shows little or no such interaction, it is generally assumed that change in dramatic form elicited or at least permitted these architectural innovations in the skene architecture. There are problems with this hypothesis:[101] (1) there may have been no *proskenion* in Athens before the second century; (2) the synchrony between the marginalization of the comic chorus and the building of *proskenion* theaters is very rough, and indeed, the evidence can be turned both ways—Menander's actors typically announce the first entrance of the chorus by saying they must get out of the way of a gang of drunks, not a very realistic motivation if ground level is far below the actors; (3) the front of the *proskenion* is fitted with three doors, indicating that it was equipped to serve as an acting space for actors exiting into the orchestra; (4) the evidence for Charonian steps in *proskenion* theaters also indicates the actors' use of the orchestra; and (5) because the reproduction of the classics of fifth-century tragedy was part of many festival programs, and because it requires interaction between chorus and actors, the orchestra should have been used at least some of the time. These counterarguments are themselves problematic. The fifth point, for example, assumes that few or no changes were made in the texts of old tragedy, but the evidence of inscriptions suggests that old tragedy may have been substantially rewritten so as to be performable without a chorus.[102]

The front of the *proskenion* is usually fitted with central double doors. Many theaters have evidence for one or more single doors placed symmetrically on each side of the central door. The *proskenion* front was frequently fitted with a gallery of half columns into the intercolumniations of which painted wooden panels (*pinakes*) or extra doors could be inserted. It is uncertain whether the paintings ever functioned as stage

[101] Discussion and literature in Moretti (1997).
[102] W.J. Slater (1993, 189–199) and the discussion in part 4.

sets.[103] The upper story of the skene also normally contained three or five large bays between columns (called *thyromata* in the modern literature). Because the openings are too large to have served for drama, it is commonly supposed that they, like the openings that held the *pinakes*, were also filled with painted panels and doorways, but the extant remains (which are few) offer no supporting evidence. If the front of the *proskenion* constituted the principal acting area, the roof of the *proskenion* presumably served for divine appearances. If the roof of the *proskenion* was the principal acting area, divine appearances were probably on the same level. With a few exceptions, most skene roofs were pitched, tiled, and impracticable.[104] In Hellenistic comedy gods do seem to appear on the same level as humans, but not at the same time.[105] Indeed, despite the common assumption that theater machinery was rampant in the Hellenistic age, there is no evidence for the *mechane* in the Hellenistic theater (though admittedly the evidence, particularly for tragedy in this period, is sparse). Certainly the remnants of Hellenistic scholarship in our scholia betray a surprising ignorance of the use of the device, and only classical, usually fifth-century drama, is cited in ancient discussions.[106] Even so, the *ekkyklema* and a similar device called the *exostra* ("out-shover") are well attested.[107] The *ekkyklema* may be used for the tragic appearance of the injured Knemon at the climax of Menander's *Dyskolos* (758).

4. *The Performance*

a. *Music and Dance*

Old Comedy was musical drama. On average 30 to 40 percent of any fifth-century Aristophanic comedy was delivered in song or recitative with musical accompaniment. Because some of the choral songs have dropped out of our texts, it is difficult to judge the percentage of musical delivery for Aristophanes' fourth-century comedies, but in its present state, the text of *Assemblywomen*, despite missing one or two choral songs, is still 25 percent musical, and *Wealth*, which is missing six choral songs, is 18 percent musical. New Comedy continued to have four choral interludes

[103] Moretti (1997, 23–25).
[104] Moretti (1992, 100).
[105] Mastronarde (1990, 274, 288).
[106] See Mastronarde (1990, 252, 280–290).
[107] Csapo and Slater (1995, 270–273 nos. IV 78–79).

between acts plus a komos at the end, but the choral songs have dropped out of our texts, and we know nothing of the nature of the performance. Nonetheless, we have evidence for the actors chanting to pipe music in at least twenty-four plays of Menander, as well as in plays of Philemon (*PCG F* 178) and Diphilus (*PCG F* 23). Almost a third of Menander's *Samia* is delivered in recitative. Several Menandrian comedies include actor's monody.[108] The importance of music in New Comedy is also emphasized by the large number of illustrations that show the piper accompanying actors.

Despite its importance, music and dance in ancient drama is a subject about which we have very little information. Some general norms, however, seem clear (though probably not rigid). Three forms of delivery are indicated by the verse. Iambic trimeter was delivered by a single voice in a stylized speaking rhythm without musical accompaniment. Iambic, trochaic, and anapaestic tetrameter were chanted by the actor or chorus and normally were accompanied by pipe music. More complex and varied lyric meters were always accompanied by music, normally choral, but sometimes by actors alone or with chorus. Each form of delivery is associated with a different form of movement. Iambic trimeters were normally delivered by the actors or the chorus leader (*koryphaios*) while standing still. Trochaic, anapaestic or iambic tetrameters generally seem to accompany movements from one part of the theater to another. Trygaios uses anapaests even when flying on the *mechane*. Often tetrameters merely show great excitement or agitation, as in the case with the trochaic ending of Dyskolos, act 4, containing Knemon's apology, while he lies wounded (though the tetrameters may begin with the emergence of the *ekkyklema*).

Choral dance can thus be divided into processional marches in tetrameters, which accompany the movement of the chorus from one part of the theater to another, and locally stationary dances (*stasima*), which are in lyric verse. The two types of dance are both accompanied by pipe music and choral lyrics, but processional lyrics are chanted to the rhythm of the march. Iambic tetrameters typically accompany the slow entrances of choruses of old men as in *Wasps*, *Lysistrata*, and *Wealth* (cf. the impersonation of old men in *Ecclesiazusae* 478–509). Trochaics bring in aggressive and angry choruses, like those of *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Peace*. The set processional dances in comedy are the entrance march (parodos), the exit (komos or exodos), and the "walking up alongside" (parabasis).

[108] *Leucadia* fr. 1.11–16 (Arnott), fr. 2; *Phasma* fr. 3 Sandbach; *Theophorumene*, "*fragmentum dubium*" Sandbach; *P. Oxy*. 3966.

Eisodos, meaning "approach" or "entranceway," is the name given by fifth-century writers to the long side entrances between the skene and the theatron, which the chorus traversed as it entered the orchestra. From the later fourth century onwards, the standard term for the passageway seems to be parodos, and writers from Aristotle onwards also apply the term to the initial performance of the chorus as it enters the theater through this passageway. Many regarded the parodos as the climactic moment of a comic production, even in the fourth century, and it may be the parodos that is regularly commemorated by the Athenian artifacts showing choral performance.[109] Hellenistic and later writers speak of the chorus entering in rectangular formation preceded by a piper—either from the right or left *eisodos*, depending on whether they are supposed to come from the city or the country (actual directions in Athens)—and looking at the actors. Not all of these details are worthy of belief, but theater terminology leaves little doubt that a choral entrance in six ranks and four files was normal, as was also an entrance from the house-right *eisodos*. From the time of Cratinus, the choreuts were classified as "left-standers," "right-standers," and "alley-standers," depending on whether they were the best dancers (on the side of the audience), next best (on the side of the skene), or worst (the two interior files).[110] Athenian marble reliefs show the comic chorus exiting (?) with a lively cancan-like high-step.

Because of its various segments in marching rhythms, we can assume that the basic rectangular formation was observed in the parabasis as well. In *Birds* the chorus asks the piper (Nightingale) to lead them into the anapaests (684). In *Acharnians* (629), *Knights* (508), and *Peace* (735), the chorus speaks of its movement "towards the theatron." The chorus probably marched right up to the theatron and chanted their advice/complaints directly into the faces of the audience (possibly removing their masks if adopting the persona of citizen choreuts). The orchestration of the remainder of the parabasis was doubtless elaborate and conventional, but we have only the confused reports of late writers, telling us that the "chorus turned seven times, facing both parts of the theater," or that they "faced each other [in two semichoruses?] and looking towards the audience marched up alongside them." This last movement might be illustrated on a fourth-century Attic chous.[111]

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[109] Sifakis (1971b).
[110] Csapo and Slater (1995, 362–364 nos. IV 312–316).
[111] Pingiatoglou (1992).

Scholars commonly generalize from the descriptions of these late authors and assume that rectangular formation was maintained even in the *stasima*. This would have made for stiff choreography. Fortunately, the text of Aristophanes suffices to show considerable variety. The chorus of Aristophanes' *Birds* describes itself moving into a round and then into a square formation (346, 353). In *Thesmophoriazusae* the chorus describes its dance (953–956): "Come, move, light on your feet, form a circle and dance hand in hand." In *Frogs*, the chorus of initiates is enjoined to "dance in a circular motion sacred to the goddess" (440–441). The choral *stasima* are likely to have adapted various forms of lyric song-dance, and the *komoi* or exit songs certainly adapted the conventional forms of the victory and wedding processions they imitate.

After Menander there is some sparse evidence of a trend towards increasing the amount of (actor's) song in comedy. The principal evidence is Roman drama, where a great many monologues and dialogues of the early Hellenistic comedies (not to mention of classical Greek tragedies) are rewritten as songs and duets.[112] This has often been thought to be a peculiar and original feature of Roman comedy, which, after all, had no chorus and was thus specially motivated to introduce music and dance elsewhere. But even in Greece, the practice of rewriting the iambics of tragedy and satyr play as songs is attested: we have musical notation accompanying iambics on three papyri from the first or second century CE, as well as a description by Lucian of tragic actors chanting iambics and singing messenger speeches.[113] The singing of tragic arias (especially excerpts put to music) became a theatrical specialization of performers called *tragoidoi*, confusingly the same word used for regular tragic actors. These singers remained popular long after we cease to hear of tragic performances. On the basis of one of the Delphic Soteria inscriptions, where pipers are listed for comic actors separately from the piper (apparently) for the comic chorus, Gentili supposed that the rewriting of early Hellenistic comedy in musical form began within a generation of Menander's death.[114] But the other Soteria lists cast some doubt on this interpretation,[115] and in any case we have seen that even the original productions of Menander and his contemporaries called for

[112] Dumont (1995).
[113] *TrGF fragmentum adespoton*. 680–682; Lucian, *De Salt*. 27; cf. *Quomodo Historia* 1.9.
[114] Gentili (1979, 22–45, esp. 23).
[115] *CID* IV no. 53, but contrast nos. 47, 55, and especially no. 48.

musical delivery by actors. Evidence for the later conversion of Menander's plays into more musical productions comes from a third-century CE musical papyrus containing several versions of the same iambic line from *Perikeiromene* with added musical notation—but Pöhlmann and West observe that the notes are all within the range of normal speech tones and suspect that it is an exercise not in song but in vocal intonation.[116]

b. *Acting*

Tragedy requires only three speaking actors to play all the roles. This striking fact also conforms to what we know of the three-man structure of acting troupes throughout antiquity: they were led by a "protagonist," and most sources assume a descending hierarchy of "deuteragonist" and "tritagonist." Modern scholars refer to this apparent restriction on the number of actors as "the three-actor rule."

The three-actor rule is not observed by comedy until the time of Menander. Aristophanic comedy sometimes requires four (and arguably five) speaking actors.[117] This is an embarrassment to any who thinks the three-actor rule was actually a "rule" imposed by Athens (and other states in her train). Why would the state limit the number of actors in tragedy and not in comedy, and if not in comedy, why were extra actors used so sparingly? Menander's apparent observance of the three-actor rule might seem to support some connection between the "rule" and the actor's competition. We could then assume that comic actors were suddenly restricted to three in response to the creation of the competition for comic actors at the Dionysia, sometime between 329 and 312. But even this line of argument has difficulties. A comic actor's prize did exist at the Lenaea from ca. 430, yet Aristophanes' Lenaean comedies use fourth actors as freely as the Dionysian. Even the most rigorous attempt to argue a three-actor rule for comedy must falter on the *Lysistrata* (which was probably Lenaean).[118] Because of these inconsistencies, I am inclined to think that the three-actor rule had less to do with state regulation than the actors' own self-interest. The protagonist alone made contracts with the organizers of festivals, normally for a fixed amount, which split better three ways than four. More importantly, it was the protagonist

[116] Huys (1993, 30–32); Pöhlmann and West (2001, 184–185, no. 56).
[117] MacDowell (1994).
[118] Marshall (1997).

alone who received the actor's prize, and the three-actor limit ideally balanced the need for poetic versatility with the desire to maximize the main actor's exposure to the audience. Certainly, Aristophanes' style of comedy is so completely centered upon the antics of its main hero that the occasional use of an extra actor could detract little from the protagonist's performance.

The restriction in the number of speaking actors resulted in enormous demands being placed on the actor's energy and versatility.[119] In Aristophanes the second and third actors each had to play as many as nine different characters, often both male and female, young and old, native and foreign, Greek and barbarian, and they sometimes switched from one to the other with lightning rapidity, with changes of mask and costume, not to mention the occasional thirty- to sixty-yard dash (from one *eisodos* to the other). The large variety of roles played by the same actor might be received as evidence for a certain degree of realism or at least mimicry in character acting. In fact, several scholars have argued the opposite, though they are only interested in the experience of the tragic protagonist.[120] Because the protagonist was competing for a prize, they claim that his chief interest lay in being identifiable despite the large variety of roles and that this interest prevented him from adapting his natural speaking voice. But the premise of the argument is wrong. With only three (main) actors, the audience and judges would have little difficulty following the changes in role, but, more importantly, they would not need to. The protagonist was the director of the troupe, and he won the prize not for his individual performance as opposed to that of his subordinates, but for the quality of the acting in his troupe's performance as opposed to that of other acting troupes in theirs.[121]

The comedies produced in and after 411 provide ample evidence for voice modulation. Here characters often impersonate others and even receive instructions in mimicry: at *Thesmophoriazusae* 267, the Kinsman (the protagonist) is instructed to "feminize the tone of his voice" and then immediately enters the Thesmophorion chattering like a housewife to an imaginary maid; in *Assembywomen* the disguised women, exhorted to speak "like a man" (149), march out singing an "old man's song, imitating the manner of countrymen" (277–279). In some cases the alteration of

[119] Helpful, but restricted to tragic examples, is Marshall (1994).
[120] Pavlovskis (1977); Jouan (1983); Damen (1989).
[121] Vetta (1995); Sifakis (1995, 21).

the actor's voice is necessary to avoid confusion. The sharing of a single role between two actors may in general have been avoided in tragedy, but is sometimes unavoidable in comedy and especially in Menander.[122] At *Lysistrata* 879, the actor playing Kinesias must supply the voice of the baby he holds by "ventriloquy."[123] Menandrian monologues frequently quote one or more other characters in direct speech, sometimes with no introductory words such as "he said," an act impossible to follow unless the actor used the voice of the character in delivery and unless all the voices employed by the actor were different.[124] Quintilian indeed complains of precisely this excess of mimicry in Menander's speeches: "even if [comic actors] play the part of a youth they nonetheless speak with a quavering or effeminate voice when reporting in a narration the speech of an old man (as for example in the prologue of *Hydria*) or a woman (as in *Georgos*)" (*Inst*. 11.3.91). Similar juxtaposition of different voices appears in Agathon's song in *Thesmophoriazusae* (101–129), where only the modulation of the voice could show that he is singing both parts of a duet between a priestess and female chorus (both voices are described as effeminate, 131, 192). If the first direct testimony that voice modulation was part of the actor's comes only in imperial times,[125] the indirect evidence of the comic texts shows its growing importance at least from 411, when the vogue for vocal mimicry is perhaps exploited by a rash of comedies involving themes of disguise and (especially crossgender) role-playing. It is at this time that the pattern of role distribution in Aristophanic comedy shows a marked change. Aristophanes no longer assigns the protagonist a single dominant role. This change gave the chief actor far more opportunity to display his powers of mimicry.[126] The trend towards greater mimesis in the use of the voice is coupled with a trend towards greater realism in gesture and costume.[127]

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[122] For tragedy, *Oedipus at Colonus* is a generally acknowledged exception. See also Sifakis (1995, 21). For comedy, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968, 154); Gomme and Sandbach (1973, 18).

[123] Marshall (1997).

[124] Men. *Samia* 256–257, *Sicyonios* 257–258, 264–266, *Misoumenos* 698–700, 799 (Arnott); Handley (forthcoming) on *P. Oxy*. 4407 (*Dis Exapaton*) 18–30.

[125] In addition to Quintilian, see Plutarch *Mor*. 711c, Lucian *Nigrinos* 11.

[126] Vetta (1995, 77).

[127] For these topics, see the chapters by J.R. Green, Csapo and Handley in Easterling and Hall (2002).

c. *Spectating*

The advantages of *prohedria* were not limited to the right to take a seat without payment or the ease of access and better view that came with a front-row location. *Prohedria* made one a conspicuous part of the social ritual into which the dramatic performances were embedded. The front rows were visible to all other spectators. The institution offered a means of displaying social status in a society where opportunities for such display were generally limited. At Piraeus the mayor himself escorted those honored with *prohedria* to their seats.[128] At Athens it is likely that officials performed a like office. As a council member, Demosthenes "led [Macedonian] ambassadors into the theater at the break of dawn," inviting them "to take front seats and put cushions on the seats and spread a purple carpet over them" with the whole population watching (and, according to Aeschines 3.76, hissing at the disgrace).

To take one's place in the theater was to participate in a social ritual that commanded recognition and respect for the social divisions it articulated. At Athens the articulated divisions were confined to those specially honored by the state, civic officials, and possibly gender and sometimes "tribal" divisions. The more complex social hierarchies of later times created more intricate divisions in the theatron, with barriers between classes and even private lodges for the highest. The representation of social order achieved perfection in the Roman theater: the very word for order, *ordo*, meant social class as well as a row of seats in the theater. Here the divisions in seating were reinforced by a strict dress code so that the theater became a vivid mosaic of the different classes wearing their different colors. As a general rule throughout antiquity, the more central the seat and the closer to the orchestra, the more conspicuous the occupant and the higher his prestige.[129] The spatial representation of hierarchy was not confined to humans or the living. At Athens the very front center was occupied by the icon of Dionysus Eleuthereus who was present in person to view the performances in his honor. In later theaters the rich and powerful managed to have their statues erected not only in the theatron but even in the orchestra or on or in front of the skene, often despite the obstacle they presented to spectators.[130] From earliest times

[128] *IG* II^2 1214.22.
[129] Rawson (1987).
[130] Moretti (1994–1995, 65–66).

order was maintained by special brigades of theater police—at Athens called "stick carriers" (*rhabdouchoi*), and by soldiers at Rome.

But ancient audiences were anything but a picture of order. Before arriving at the spectacle, the Athenian audience had spent a day participating in carnival activities. These included elaborate parades with costume, music, dancing, and elaborate floats containing, among other things, enormous wooden penises carried by men sporting fake erections in red leather and singing drunken abuse at spectators in the streets.[131] We hear of a spectacular 180-foot-long golden phallus ending the parade in Alexandria, or a giant, self-propelled, slime-trailing mechanical snail, which led the parade in Athens in 308.[132] Ordinary citizen men were expected to join in wearing satyr masks or women's clothing. Wine was doled out freely in the streets and in the sanctuary where the procession ended in an enormous public feast. For many, the parade that escorted Dionysus from the city gates to the theater was the highlight of the festival.

The riot and drunkenness spilled into the theater. Philochorus writes (*FGrH* 328 F 171),

> At the time of the contests of the festivals of Dionysus, the Athenians first, after taking breakfast and drinking wine, walk to the spectacle and watch it with garlands on their heads. Throughout the contest wine is poured out for them and dried fruit and nuts are passed around. They poured out wine when the choruses were entering the theater and then again after the play, when the choruses were exiting.

Supplying food and wine to the audience was no small part of a choregos's expense (probably not just for comedy). Aristophanes mocks this custom in *Wasps* 58–59 and *Wealth* 794–801 and probably practices it at *Peace* 962. This audience of picnickers was accordingly frequently volatile. They showed their approval with clapping and shouts (which might interrupt even a tragic performance) and their displeasure with whistling, clucking, banging their heels against the bleachers, and pelting the actors with the distributed fruit and nuts, sometimes bringing the performance to an ignominious end.[133] The tragedian could only hope to keep this volatility in check, and even Agathon had a play expelled from the theater by a hostile audience. By contrast, the main challenge to comic poets and actors was to tap and manage this energy and use it to their advantage, which

[131] See Cole (1993); Csapo (1997b, esp. 268).
[132] Callixeinus *FGrH* 627 F 2; Democharesin Polybius 12.13.11.
[133] Pickard-Cambridge (1968, 272–275).

they did by bringing the audience into the play through direct appeals, flattery, and insult, or even through the mechanism of the plot, employing such devices as the creation of an "audience" within the play to shape the response of the external one.[134] In Hellenistic and imperial times, the audience, more oppressed politically, was all the readier to make its voice heard in the theater. We hear of professional claquers whose function was to provoke and orchestrate audience response. This became something of a science in Hellenistic and imperial times, where there developed a system of rhythmic clapping and chanting of such complexity that we hear of unlucky provincials in Rome being beaten by soldiers for ignorantly clapping out of rhythm.[135] By imperial times the auditorium had become a political stage of a most serious kind, where emperors courted popular approval, and audiences frequently voiced their discontent, chanting their demands and sometimes breaking into bloody riots. Actors, pantomimes, and claque artists competed to elicit not so much an audience response as an audience performance that served their partisan interests, though this kind of activity is best attested for audiences of mimes, pantomimes, gladiators, and horse races, which all eventually eclipsed drama as popular entertainments.

[134] A good beginning to the study of audience management is H.W. Slater (1999).
[135] Tacitus *Annales* 16.4–5; Dubourdieu and Moreua (1986).

CHAPTER FIVE

MYTH AND RITUAL IN COMEDY

Angus Bowie

1. *Mythological Comedy*

a. *Overview*

One of the great losses from ancient literature is the almost total disappearance of "mythological comedy," that is, comedies that took mythological subjects as their principal themes, either by treating a particular myth comically or by putting characters from mythology into new situations.[1] No mythological play is extant, and only meagre fragments remain of what was once a major type of play throughout Greek comedy. As a result of the desperately fragmentary nature of the evidence for both mythological and ritual comedies, one cannot stress too much how provisional will be a good deal of what follows, both in terms of analysis and of statistics, the latter of which must be taken as indicative, not absolute. A major difficulty is that titles are not necessarily good guides to contents: Eupolis' *Autolycus* might look mythological, but we happen to know it concerned the son of Lycon, a favorite of Callias (Athen. 216CD)[2]—it could still have put him in a mythological context, but this fact gives us pause; and Menander's *Hero* takes its name not from a mythological plot but from the local divinity who spoke the delayed prologue.

We do well too to bear in mind Aristotle's remark that "in comedy, those who are the bitterest enemies in the story, such as Orestes and

[1] For further detail on the material in this chapter, cf. A.M. Bowie (1993, 1997, 2000, 2007). For other recent general treatments on our topics, cf. Carrière (1997); Bierl (2002); Casolari (2000); Auffarth (2007). The reader is referred to the notes in Kassel-Austin in all cases (I borrow their categorization of poets as "V" [fifth century], etc.). For commentaries on selected fragments, cf. Carrière (1979); S.D. Olson (2007). The fragments of Ameipsias, Callias, Diodorus, and Metagenes are edited in Belardinelli et al. (1998). There are major studies of some poets: R. Hunter (1983); W.G. Arnott (1996); Storey (2003). Menander is quoted from Arnott's Loeb edition.

[2] Cf. Storey (2003, 81–94).

Aegisthus, become the best of friends by the end, and nobody is killed by anybody" (*Poet*. 1453a.36–39). It is not certain what period he is referring to, but the remark opens up all manner of possibilities. True, it suggests we would be unwise always to be conservative in our estimates of what comedy did with myth—if these two could be reconciled, what might not have happened?—, but it is also a warning of how problematic it is to reconstruct with confidence anything of comic plots from the scraps we have.

The earliest comedy for which we have evidence is Sicilian comedy, where mythological comedy was very common. Nearly half of Epicharmus' forty-seven preserved titles,[3] possibly all of Phormus' six,[4] and ten or eleven of Dinolochus' twelve[5] appear to have mythological titles. We have a little evidence for how the Sicilian playwrights dealt with mythology. The gluttony of Heracles bulks large in the fragments of Epicharmus: *Busiris* contained a humorous description of Heracles at table (fr. 18), and the *Marriage of Hebe* provided an immense list of foods (frr. 39–64), apparently arranged by the gods for Heracles' marriage. Odysseus also seems a regular figure: in *Odysseus the Deserter*, there appears to have been a comic reworking of the spying mission of *Iliad* 10 (fr. 97), and someone, perhaps Odysseus talking of his time in Troy, complains that he was accused of having traded to the Greeks his neighbor's pigs, which were being kept for the Eleusinia festival (fr. 99; note the mixture of contemporary and mythical). He may also have appeared in *Sirens* and *Philoctetas*, as also presumably in Phormus' *Alcinous*, *The Sack of Troy or the Horse*, and Dinolochus' *Circe*.

We are very poorly informed about the early period of Attic comedy. Since in its earliest phases it must have been much influenced by the existing genres of tragedy and satyr play, and also possibly by comic works from outside Attica,[6] it would not be surprising if mythological comedy featured from the beginning. The possible candidates are Magnes *Diony-*

[3] *Alcyoneus*, *Amycus*, *Antanor*, *Atalantai*, *Bacchae*, *Busiris*, ?*Dictyes* (Nets), *Dionysuses*, *Marriage of Hebe* (reworked as *Muses*?), *Heracles and the Girdle*, *Heracles chez Pholus*, *Heracles* …, *Cyclops*, *Comasts* or *Hephaestus*, *Medea*, *Odysseus the Deserter*, *Odysseus Shipwrecked*, *Odysseus* …, *Pyrrha and Promatheus*, *Sirens*, *Sciron*, *Sphinx*, *Trojans*, *Philoctetas*. On Dorian comedy, cf. Olivieri (1946–1947); Pickard-Cambridge (1962, 230–290); Kerkhof (2001); Casolari (2000, 47–59).

[4] *Admetus*, *Alcinous*, *Halcyones* (or *Halcyoneus*?), *Atalantai*, *Capture of Troy* or *the Horse*, *CephePerseus*.

[5] *Althaea*, *Amazons*, *Circe*, possibly *Comoedotragodia*, *Leucarion*, *Medea*, *Oeneus*, *Orestes*, *Telephus*, *Pholus*.

[6] Cf. S.D. Olson (2007, 2–6).

sus I and II, and Ecphantides' *Satyrs*. One might have taken Chionides' *Heroes* as a mythological play, but fr. 1, "I know a lot of young men who, unlike you, get on with guard-duty lying on their rush-mats," might suggest contemporary reference to a father's complaint about a son's disinclination from military service. It is only from around the middle of the century that we have a clearer picture of use of mythological comedy.

Looking at the whole period of Old Comedy, the proportion of mythological plays is about a third of the total number. Over the succeeding centuries, this proportion shows a slow and then a considerable decline: for the fourth, fourth/third, and third centuries, the proportions are roughly a quarter, a tenth, and a tenth, respectively.[7] Within that decline, however, there are fluctuations, as we shall see. In Old Comedy, taking the figures for the major earlier poets, we find that about a quarter of the extant titles are mythological. These are figures for some of the major poets (mythological titles/total titles), with rough dates of the start of their careers:[8] Cratinus (late 450s) 11/29; Crates (late 450s–early 440s) 1/11; Callias (victorious 446) 3/9; Telecleides (mid-440s) 1/9; Pherecrates (mid-440s) 4/19; Hermippus (victorious 435) 5/10; Phrynichus (first victory 428) 3?/10; Eupolis (first play 429) 1/17;[9] Aristophanes (first play 427) 13/45. However, for the last two decades of the fifth century, that figure rises to nearly half,[10] with a notable preference for such plays found in Plato 10/31;[11] Philyllius 7/10; Theopompus 8/20; Nicophon 4/6; Polyzelus 5/5; Strattis 10/19;[12] Nicochares 7/9; Alcaeus 5/8. The reasons for this is a topic I shall return to.

In the fourth century, there is a similar variation in different periods. In the first half, what Nesselrath calls the "Blütezeit" of mythical comedy,[13] between a third and a half of the plays are of this type. In the second half, however, the proportion drops to a third or even a quarter. There are some playwrights who have a strong penchant for such plays, most notably Eubulus with half his known output (30/58), and Anaxandrides (14/41) and Anaxilas (7/22) with a third of theirs, and Antiphanes (28/138)

[7] Old Comedy: 125/385 (385 represents about half the plays produced, on a very crude calculation, assuming about 100 Dionysias and 50 Lenaeas, with 5 plays at each, and no reductions during the Peloponnesian War; forty-eight authors), IV 128/485 (forty-four authors), IV/III 32/395 (fourteen authors), III/I 7/75 (forty authors).

[8] Cf. S.D. Olson (2007, 379–391) for the epigraphic evidence.

[9] Cf. Storey (2003, 372–373).

[10] Contrast Ameipsias 0/7, Archippus 2/6, Metagenes 0/4.

[11] Cf. Rosen (1995).

[12] His *Zopyrus Ablaze* was a parody of Spintharus' tragedy *Heracles Ablaze*.

[13] Nesselrath (1990a, 201).

with a fifth. However, in the transition from fourth to third centuries, there are authors with a much greater aversion to mythology, such as Diphilus (7/61), Menander (?3/97), Philemo (at most 3/61), and Alexis (14/136). We can say little about third-century playwrights because very few of the forty authors have many titles surviving, but for mythological comedy, notable and in the declining trend are Apollodorus Carystius (1/12), Euphro (1/9), and Posidippus (2/18). In second- and first-century comedy, we have some thirty-five authors contributing twenty-seven titles, of which only two are mythological, both by the same author—Alexander's *Helen* and *Dionysus*, two figures who were among the most popular in earlier times.

In the fourth century, this decline in the importance of mythology in comedy can perhaps be discerned not just statistically, but also in such fragments as that from Antiphanes' *Poiesis*, where a character expresses envy of tragic poets whose stories are instantly recognized by the audience as soon as a name is mentioned, whereas comic poets have to make everything up. The result is that "if a Chremes or a Pheidon forgets something, he's whistled off stage, but Peleus and Teucer can get away with anything" (fr. 189.21–23; cf. Diphilus fr. 29.4–5). This idea is presumably also the background to Mercury/Sosia's remarks in Plautus' *Amphitryo*, where he debates whether the play is to be a comedy or a tragedy: "I know what you want: I'll make it a mixed play, a tragicomedy. I don't think it right to make it a straightforward comedy, when there will be kings and gods on stage" (58–61). He returns to the point later, imagining surprise from the audience that Zeus will appear onstage: "What? Surprised? As if it were a new idea to put Zeus on stage! Why, only last year when the actors here on stage invoked him, he came and helped them" (89–92). This suggests that in Rome too at this time, mythological comedies were not unknown, but were uncommon enough to occasion comment.

We can gain some insights into how this period of comedy treated myth from Plautus' *Amphitryo*, which was possibly based on Philemon's New Comedy *The Long Night*. This takes place at the moment that Amphityro returns from war, just as Jupiter is enjoying an artificially lengthened night with Amphitryo's wife. It makes much play of double identity, of Jupiter disguised as the king, and of his servant Mercury disguised as Amphitryo's slave Sosia. Jupiter eventually makes up the quarrel that arises between mortal husband and wife as a result of the misunderstandings and reappears at the end to sort everything out. As we shall see is generally the case in later comedy, the gods are very much brought down to the level of mortals in terms of character and

concerns, and they come across as more rascally than the poor, deluded mortals; their power to do whatever they wish makes for a good deal of the comedy.

b. *Subject Matter*

i. *Old Comedy*

Looking at subject matter more broadly, we find that, though Old Comedy does not produce anything like the proportion found in tragedy, the Trojan story with its various ramifications is one of the more popular topics.[14] It formed the subject matter of Hermippus' and Nicochares' *Agamemnon*; Plato's *Menelaus*; Philyllius' *Helen*; Strattis' *Troilus*, *Myrmidons*, and *Philoctetes*; and Menecrates' *Manector* (*Manes Plays Hector*). This number is notably increased if we add the plays concerning Odysseus:[15] Callias' *Cyclopes*; Cratinus' *Odysseus and His Men* (*Odysses*); Nicophon's *Sirens* (unperformed, according to Athen. 270A); Philyllius' *Washer-Women or Penelope*; Polyzelus' *Niptra*; and Theopompus' *Odysseus*, *Penelope*, and *Sirens*. The most popular hero is Heracles,[16] as in Cratinus' *Busiris*; Hermippus' *Cercopes*, Nicochares' *Heracles the Choregus*, Philyllius' *Auge* and *Heracles*, Plato's *Zeus Mistreated* and *Wool-Carders or Cercopes*, Pherecrates' *Anthropheracles*, and Archippus' and Nicochares' *Marriage of Heracles*. Other popular subjects are Atalanta (Callias, Euthycles, Philyllius, and Strattis), Cheiron (Apollophanes, Aristophanes, Cratinus, Nicocares, and Pherecrates), and the Centaurs,[17] the last perhaps because their blend of the natural and the civilized made them suitable vehicles for moral comment on modern depravities: in Cratinus' *Cheirons* they discourse on modern moral laxity in an apparent parody of the Hesiodic *Counsels of Cheiron*, supposedly given to Achilles by the Centaur (fr. 253).

In later comedy, the Trojan story generally declines in popularity, with only Anaxandrides' and Philetaerus' *Achilles*, Philemo's *Myrmidons*, Theophilus' *Neoptolemus*, Eubulus' *Phoenix*, and Antiphanes' *Philoctetes*. Helen seems to become a little more popular, largely thanks to Alexis with his *Helen*, *The Rape of Helen*, and *The Suitors of Helen*; there is

[14] It is the most popular mythical nexus in tragedy, with some sixty-eight titles out of the three hundred or so we know: cf. Knox (1979, 9).

[15] On Odysseus in comedy, cf. most recently Casolari (2000, 197–225).

[16] On Heracles in comedy, cf. most recently Casolari (2000, 227–295).

[17] Cf. Farioli (2000); Nicochares' *Centaur(s)*; Pherecrates' *Cheiron* (on which, cf. Dobrov and Urios-Aparisi [1995]).

also Anaxandrides' *Helen*. Heracles[18] and Odysseus are still the most popular heroes. The titles of the latter are widened to include an Iliadic topic, *Dolon* by Eubulus, beside the Odyssean ones to which Old Comedy seems to have restricted itself; Circe and Calypso are also added. Alexis' *Odysseus the Weaver* may be an example of the way comedy could twist its inherited plots, with Odysseus and not Penelope doing the weaving. The Centaurs too continue to appear (in five plays as in Old Comedy, a reduced frequency). There are in general about twice as many individual myths in Middle and New Comedy as in Old, which may represent a broadening of scope, though we do have nearly three times as many titles for the later two periods as for the earlier.

Knox pointed out that one of the main differences between tragedy and comedy was that no tragedy "deals exclusively (and only two of them—the *Prometheus* plays—extensively) with gods."[19] A list of Old Comedies more or less certainly concerning gods produces nearly fifty plays. The most popular subject is the god of drama himself. Details are largely obscure, but he suffers variously in Aristophanes' *Frogs* and *Dionysus Shipwrecked*, Cratinus' *Dionysalexandrus* (see below), and Eupolis' *Taxiarchs*, where he was taught military ways by the (dead) general Phormio.[20] Almost equally popular is Zeus. Apart from those two, amongst the Olympians only Aphrodite appears to have more than one play dedicated to her, and two of those are "birth" plays.[21] Athena also has a "birth" play but no more, and the Sun appears once. Given the popularity of plays on Zeus' infidelities, Hera will no doubt have been involved in a good number of plays. However, gods such as Apollo and Artemis, Poseidon, Demeter, Hephaestus, and Hermes do not have plays of their own. They will, however, obviously have had supporting roles: in the extant plays, Poseidon's dignity is sorely tested when he comes on an embassy with Heracles and the Triballian god to the birds, and *Peace*, *Wealth*, and *Dionysalexandrus* show that Hermes especially, as mediator between gods and men, will have appeared more than the fragments suggest.[22]

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[18] In the fourth century, masks of Heracles make up 6.66 percent of all masks (actual or represented). His is the only individual mask; other masks are of stock figures. Cf. J.R. Green (1994, 72); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 15.94 (= Adesp. fr. 49 K-A).

[19] Knox (1979, 8–9).

[20] Cf. Storey (2003, 246–260).

[21] For this type of "birth" play, popular in the transitional period between Old and Middle Comedy, cf. Nesselrath (1995). Philiscus specialized in these: four of his eight plays are "birth" plays.

[22] For ways in which gods who do not actually appear may be important in plays, cf. C.A. Anderson (1995).

The situation in Middle and New Comedy is similar.[23] Zeus and Dionysus continue to feature, with erotic adventures in the case of the first still prominent. Athena does not feature, but Aphrodite is still popular: there are Anaxandrides' *Anchises*, Antiphanes' *Birth of Aphrodite*, and Philiscus' *Birth of Hermes and Aphrodite* (probably actually two plays); compare too Poseidippus' *Hermaphroditus*. Apollo and Artemis may have a play each, by Philemo and Ephippus, and there is also Philiscus' *Birth of Apollo and Artemis*. Pan has his own plays, Amphis' and Timostratus' *Pan*, and Philiscus' and Ararus' *Birth of Pan*.

Given the civic nature of the festivals at which comedy was performed, one might have expected local Athenian legends to feature quite prominently, especially perhaps at the Lenaea, when the audience was largely composed of Athenians. This is not, however, the case, especially in Old Comedy. Important mythical figures such as Cecrops, Erechtheus and his daughters, Pandion, and Triptolemus do not seem to have plays about them.[24] Even Theseus has only two titles, by Aristonymus and Theopompus, though he appeared in Cratinus' *Runaways* and perhaps in Philyllius' *Aegeus*.[25] Local cults do sometimes appear: Telecleides' *Amphictyons* treated Amphictyon's introduction of Dionysus and his cult into Attica, and Aristophanes' *Anagyrus* concerned the legend of an Attic farmer who was punished for cutting down a sacred grove; Euripides' *Hippolytus*, which has a similar plot, was parodied in the play (cf. fr. 53). Pherecrates' *Ant Men* recounted the Aeginetan myth of the creation of men from ants, and Crates wrote a *Tereus*, a hero connected with Athens and Megara. Old Comedy, even more perhaps than tragedy, seems to have preferred to use internationally known myths.

The situation is rather different in Middle and New Comedy. Subjects found in Old Comedy recur: *Theseus* is the title of two plays, by Anaxandrides and Diphilus, to which can be added Alexis' *Sciron* and Aristophon's *Peirithous*. Anaxandrides and Philetaerus wrote on Tereus. Diphilus may have written an *Anagyrus*. Subjects now appear that were not treated in Old Comedy: Anaxandrides wrote an *Erechtheus*,

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[23] Cf., in general, Webster (1970) 82 ff.; R. Hunter (1983, 22–30); Nesselrath (1990a, 188–241).

[24] We find Erechtheus and Aegeus but once, summoned as witnesses, it seems, rather than as characters in the play (Ar. *Banqueters* fr. 217), Pericles as Buzyges (Eupolis *Demes* fr. 103), and very sporadic mentions of other Athenian heroes, again not as characters.

[25] Apart from Theseus, these myths are not that common in tragedy either: Erechtheus (Euripides), Pandion (Philocles, a tetralogy), Triptolemus (Sophocles), Cecrops (none). Plays about Medea may have concerned her time in Athens, but we cannot tell.

Clearchus and Nicostratus a *Pandrosus*; and there are also Eubulus' *Ion* and *Xuthus*, and Antiphanes' *Melanion*. We may also have to reckon here with influence of Euripides in the case of the *Erechtheus*, *Ion*, and perhaps *Sciron*, on which he wrote a satyr play.[26] We must again bear in mind the larger number of titles in these periods, but it may be that we are seeing a greater willingness to treat Athenian subjects.

The mythological Old Comedy that is best known to us is Cratinus' *Dionysalexandrus*, because its hypothesis has partially survived:[27]

> … judgement, Hermes goes away and the chorus address a few words to the audience about the generation of children [?or poets] and when Dionysus appears they mock and ridicule him. When they [?the goddesses] come [?to him], he … Hera offers unshakable tyranny, Athena courage in war and Aphrodite the chance to be the most beautiful and desirable of men; Dionysus decides that Aphrodite is the winner. After this, he sails to Sparta and brings Helen back to Mount Ida. In a while, he hears that the Achaeans are ravaging the land and looking for Alexander [Paris]. So, as quickly as he can, he hides Helen in a basket, and, changing himself into a ram, awaits developments. Alexander arrives, discovers them both and is about to give them to the Achaeans. When Helen cowers in fear, he pities her and keeps her to make her his wife; Dionysus he sends off to be handed over later, but the satyrs summon him and say they would never betray him. Pericles is mocked in the play very cleverly by implication (*di' emphaseos*), for having brought the war on the Athenians.

The comedy clearly shared motifs with satyr plays, though it is likely that the pattern of the escape of Dionysus and his satyrs was followed. Like tragedy, comedy feels free to create new versions of the myth, but the story is close to the account in the *Cypria*,[28] with variations to introduce the new suitor for Helen's hand.

One other plot of Cratinus is dimly visible. *Nemesis* dealt with the story of how Zeus adopted the disguise of a swan in order to seduce Nemesis at Rhamnous, in a union that produced Helen.[29] He was told, "you must become a big bird" (fr. 114), and someone instructed Leda, "Leda, it's up to you: you must have an elegant go at making yourself as much like a hen as possible, sit on this egg, and hatch us some fine and amazing bird from it" (fr. 115). Here, it appears that comedy stays close to the "serious"

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[26] For Anaxandrides and Euripides, cf. Nesselrath (1993).

[27] Cf. most recently, Revermann (1997) and (2006); Melero Bellido (1997); McGlew (2002, 25–56); Casolari (2000, 98–109), Storey (2006a); S.D. Olson (2007, 87–91). On Cratinus generally, cf. Bakola (2009).

[28] P.102.13 ff. Allen.

[29] Cf. Casolari (2000, 79–97); Revermann (2006a, 305–306).

version of the myth, whilst treating the divine characters in a comically ludicrous manner, as found in plays like *Frogs* or *Dionysalexandrus*.

Other broad features can also be detected. Comedy understandably appears not to have shied away from the more grotesque elements of myth. Aristophanes' *Proagon* introduced Euripides (T iv) and parodied his *Thyestes*. Someone, presumably Thyestes, uttered the words, "when, wretched, I have tasted sausage made of my children, how could I look upon a roast snout?" (fr. 478), and it was probably the same person who said "ugh! what is causing my stomach to churn? Damn it! Where could I get a chamber, pot?" (fr. 477).

The hypothesis of *Dionysalexandrus* states that the play was an attack on Pericles by implication—that is, presumably, an allegorical attack—and politics was clearly a regular feature of mythological comedy. Unfortunately, we have no information on the extent or nature of the allegory in *Dionysalexandrus*. It is easy to find Pericles in Dionysus, and no doubt Helen related in some way to Aspasia, with the comic implication that Pericles caused the war because of her.[30] Beyond that we cannot go.[31] Cratinus' *Nemesis*, mentioned above, is also usually taken to be similarly allegorical, but if it really was, it is even harder to decode. Fr. 118, "come Zeus, friend of the stranger, long-headed," points to Pericles' curiously shaped skull, but how the story of Zeus' seduction of Nemesis by taking the disguise of a swan was related to contemporary politics now escapes us. Nonetheless, Pericles was not infrequently compared to Zeus,[32] and Aspasia was compared to a number of female goddesses and heroines, though these may be simple comparisons, rather than allegorical representations.[33]

These plays seem to introduce politics into mythology: other plays brought gods into fifth-century Athens. For instance, in Cratinus' *Pluti* the Titans came to earth from Tartarus to seek an unknown "ancient relative" (possibly Plutus himself) and took part in the trial of Nicias' son, Hagnon, on a charge of unjust enrichment.[34] Fr. 171.22–23 has a political flavor: "now that the reign of tyranny has been [?broken], and the people is in power." The tyranny is presumed to be Zeus' and so there might be

[30] Cf. Ar. *Ach*. 526–539.

[31] The unconvincing attempts of Schwarze (1971, 6–24) to expound the allegory illustrate the problem.

[32] Cf. Cratinus frr. 73, 118, 258; Telecleides fr. 18; Ar. *Ach*. 530.

[33] Helen: Eupolis *Prospaltioi* fr. 267; Hera: Cratinus *Cheirons* fr. 259; Deianeira: fr. adesp. 704; Omphale: Plut. *Peric*. 24.9, Σ Pl. *Menex*. 235E.

[34] Revermann (2006a, 307–308).

another reference to Pericles, who was removed from power in 429. Cratinus' *Cheirons* produced the intriguing mixture of Centaurs and the ghost of Solon (fr. 246), along with lyrics telling of the birth to Stasis and Cronus of Pericles, "the great tyrant whom the gods call 'head-gatherer'," and of Aspasia, the "concubine dog-eyed one", to Licentiousness (frr. 258–259). His *Runaways* somehow combined Theseus, who tells how "I discovered Cercyon shitting at dawn among the vegetables and strangled him" (fr. 53), and Lampon, sent by Pericles to found a colony at Thurii.

The evidence is scanty, therefore, but it is clear that political allegory was a regular feature of Old Comedy, the allegorical aspect no doubt providing a measure of safety from possible legal sanction. The ancient evidence records that "Cratinus' *Odysseus and his Men* contains censure of no-one, but criticism of Homer's *Odyssey*."[35] The fact that the absence of political comment was noticed may indicate this was an unusual play, and it has been suggested that the precarious military situation of the city caused a decree banning political comedy, which led to this play's composition.[36]

Aristophanic comedy is notable for its obscenity, and this appears in other writers too. Plato's *Phaon* dealt with the man who carried the disguised Aphrodite over a river and was rewarded with a salve that made him irresistible to women. The divinity Curotrophus informs a group of women of the preliminary rites that they must perform if they wish to see Phaon, which involve cakes of suggestive natures, aphrodisiacs, and offerings to various sexual deities, such as the ithyphallic Orthannes, Bent-Back, Bent-Forward, and the Rider (fr. 188).[37] A second fragment has men discussing aphrodisiac recipes from Philoxenus' *New Cookery Book* (fr. 189):

A. Listen, I shall start from the grape-hyacinth bulb and end with the tuna … Having softened the bulbs in the ashes, douse them in sauce and eat as many as you can: it straightens a man up … The red mullet does not like to give tension to a man's members: it belongs to virgin Artemis and hates stiffness. Now the scorpion-fish …

B. May it bite your arse!

[35] Platonius, *diff. com*. I.51–52, p. 5K; cf. *Odysses* T i; Casolari (2000, 47–55); Revermann (2006a, 306).

[36] There is a tradition that Morychides introduced a decree against person abuse in comedy, which was in force from 439–437. Halliwell (1991a) supports the authenticity of this decree and sees it as the result of the delicate situation of the time of the Samian War.

[37] Cf. Rosen (1995, 132–136); S.D. Olson (2007, 268–271).

Finally, there is a period, in the last decade or so of the fifth century, when comedy turned specifically to tragedy for mythical subjects, not just for the parody of certain passages or features of tragedy, but in order to parody whole recent plays.[38] The earliest of these would appear to be Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, which for much of its course is composed sequentially of parodies of Euripides' *Telephus*, *Palamedes*, *Helen*, and *Andromeda*. We cannot know for certain, but this play may have been responding to Euripides' introduction of comic elements into plays of this period like the *Helen* and thus started a trend for prolonged imitation of particular tragedies.

The playwright who seems to have made most use of this technique is Strattis. Parodies of Euripides' play in the fragments suggest his *Phoenissae* was of this type (fr. 47 = *Phoen*. 460–461; fr. 48 ≈ 546); and Aristophanes' *Phoenissae*, also of this period, was probably another parody of Euripides' (cf. frr. 570, 574). Fr. 1 of Strattis' *Anthroporestes* describes Euripides' *Orestes* (408) as a "very clever play" and complains of Hegelochus' notorious mispronunciation of *Or*. 279. He also wrote a *Chrysippus*, as did Euripides around this time, and *Lemnomeda* may have imitated *Thesmophoriazusae*'s combination of plays by mixing Euripides' *Andromeda* (412) and his *Hypsipyle* (408 or 407) about the Women of Lemnos. All of these parody Euripides, but his *Philoctetes* may be a response to Sophocles' play of 409, and *Zopyrus Ablaze* parodied Spintharus' tragedy *Heracles Ablaze*.[39]

ii. *Middle and New Comedy*

The situation regarding mythology in later comedy is in many ways even more obscure. Having carefully considered what evidence there is, Nesselrath concluded that Middle Comedy tended to reduce and rationalize the fantastic, fairy-tale aspects of the myths, replacing these with elements from everyday life.[40] In other words, Middle Comedy was a transitional stage to New, continuing the reduction to the ordinary of divine beings. For instance, Antiphanes treated the grim legend of

[38] Platonius attributes this to fear of reprisals for political satire (cf. *diff. com*. I.13–31, esp. 27–31, p. 4K for Aristophanes' *Aeolosicon*): later comedy abandons politics and "turned to making fun of stories told by poets."

[39] A tantalizing fragment, possibly of Old Comedy though taken as a satyr play by some, discusses tragedy in the context of a speaker's introduction of wine to mortals; it is studied by Bierl (1990).

[40] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 236); also Casolari (2000, 127–168), mainly on the Cyclopes, (181–195).

Euripides' *Aeolus* in his play of that name. The tragedy told how Macareus raped his sister Canace and persuaded his father Aeolus to marry his sons by lot to his daughters. The lot, however, gave Canace to another brother; when Aeolus discovered the rape, he sent Canace a sword, which she turned on herself. Macareus subsequently killed himself in grief. Nesselrath (205–209) suggests that in Antiphanes, as in later New Comedies, Macareus and Canace will have turned out not to be siblings after all, and so there would have been no suicide and no impediment to their marriage. In Anaxandrides' *Protesilaus*, the long fragment about the feast (fr. 42; see below) will have come from a celebration of Protesilaus' return *alive* from Troy, the announcement of his death having been premature, like that of, say, Cleostratus in Menander's *Aspis*. There is no direct evidence for these ideas, but the general notion is far from impossible. As a result of this rationalizing and reducing of gods and heroes to situations familiar from everyday existence, Nesselrath (1990a, 240) argues that the gods became ever more like ordinary people, to the extent that in the end the plays did not need mythological inspiration and could use plots about ordinary folk. The interest in everyday life leads to plays about love affairs, suppositious children, mistaken identity, confidence tricks, and the like, with a cast of vivid stock characters, and the plots become more variations on these themes than reworkings of the kind of mythical patterns found in Old Comedy.[41]

A few fragments give hints of what could be done. An anonymous fragment comes from a play about the overthrow of Cronus by Zeus. Rhea speaks what may be the prologue:[42]

> Old Cronus gulps down and gobbles up all my children, and he doesn't turn even one of them to me. Instead, *he* gives me the finger, and takes whatever *I* give birth to off to Megara, sells and eats it; because he's afraid of the oracle in the same way … a dog. For Apollo once loaned Cronus a drachma and didn't get it back. He was angry about this and no longer loaned him anything valuable, or any household items, by Zeus, or any money. Instead, he prophesied that Cronus would be expelled from his kingship by a child. So since he's afraid of this, he swallows down all his children. (trans. S.D. Olson)

The bathos of the treatment is clear: the swallowing of the children becomes the consumption of the money raised by taking them to slave markets familiar to the audience; the dispute between the gods is over

[41] Cf. N.W. Slater (1995) and Sutton (1990) on the shift in the types of plot.
[42] Fr. adesp. 1062.3–14; cf. Nesselrath (1995, 23–26); S.D. Olson (2007, 125–126).

trivial amounts, but Apollo hits back in a grand manner with an oracle not, say, a lawsuit. Such a mixture of bathos and the grotesque can be seen also in Eubulus' *Procris*, where Cephalus' bronze hound Lailaps is treated like a lapdog (fr. 89): "Won't you put something soft down for the dog? Put some Milesian fleece under him and a cloak above him.—My god!—Then fill him up with gruel of goose milk.—Heavens!—Then rub his feet with Megallus' myrrh."[43] Amphis' *Athamas*, fr. 1 talks of a hetaera being better natured to her man than a wife, which may suggest something about how Athamas' rejection of Nephele in favor of Ino was handled. Similarly, in Eubulus' *Anchises*, the meeting of the mortal with Aphrodite may have been treated in a like manner.[44]

In Menander's extant plays, the gods no longer take part in the action but are relegated to the prologues, either at the very start or more often in "postponed" prologues after the first scene. The most striking postponed prologue comes in *Aspis*, where, after Daos' graphic account of the campaign in which he thinks his master died, Chance comes on to correct him and reveal more of the situation. Similarly, *Periceiromene* begins with an apparent tryst between Glycera, Polemon's lover, and Moschion, supposedly a suitor but actually her brother. Report of this drives Polemon to fury, and Agnoia (Ignorance) enters to put the matter straight. This general guiding hand from absent divinities[45] is unlike what we find in extant Old Comedy: contrast for instance the Clouds who come to punish Socrates and Strepsiades.

In Middle and New Comedy, there is a good deal of use of tragic language, situations, and devices, though it is not always possible to say whether the influence is direct or the result of similar situations producing similar drama.[46] It is clear, however, that the long speech by Eleusinius in Menander's *Sicyonioi* (176 ff.), describing the public determination of Philumena's status, is modeled on the two messenger speeches in a similar situation in Euripides' *Orestes*. The use of tragic models is more complex in Menander's *Epitrepontes*, when Smicrines arbitrates between two slaves (act 2). This is similar to the situation in Euripides' *Alope*, where a king decided between two shepherds. As

[43] Cf. S.D. Olson (2007, 128–129); Procris may be Speaker B, overhearing Cephalus' commands.

[44] R. Hunter (1983, 88).

[45] *Georgus*, *Sicyonioi*, and *Phasma* also had prologues, *Hero* and *Epitrepontes* postponed ones; note the unusual alphabetically acrostic prologue spoken by Aphrodite in fr. adesp. 53.

[46] Cf. Katsouris (1995b, 59–61; 1975); R. Hunter (1985, 114–136); Hurst (1990, 93–122).

Hunter notes, however, Menander has Syriscus evoke another play in the course of this scene, probably Sophocles' *Tyro* (325–333): "the reference to tragedies within a scene modeled on a tragic forerunner shows us Menander lightly toying with the motifs of his plot … It acknowledges the dramatic debt without in fact parodying the tragic model" (R. Hunter [1985] 135). No doubt if we had more, we would find other examples of such subtle use of tragedy.

In later Comedy, the political aspect of mythological comedy is present but rather reduced.[47] This is not to say that contemporary institutions, individuals, and events were not regularly introduced into plays, but we cannot always say how far such references were incidental jokes and how far plays pursued a consistent attack on particular contemporary figures. Mythical scenes can also have a strong Athenian flavor, as in Cratinus Junior's *Chiron* fr. 9, where a character speaks of his difficulty in finding the fellow members of his deme and phratry, and his subsequent enrolment into a symposium; he proclaims proudly that he has a Zeus Herceius and Phratrius and pays his taxes. Events outside Athens also appear. In one of the longest fragments we have, of seventy-one lines from Anaxandrides' *Protesilaus* (fr. 42), the excellence of the fare (presumably at Protesilaus' wedding to Laodamia) is compared favorably with that at the historical wedding prepared for his daughter and Iphicrates by Cotys, king of Thrace, in 387/386. Thirty-one lines describe the historical wedding, ending with a "hecatomb of octopus" (29), before the fragment closes with a thirty-one-line list of some ninety-eight individual foods to be served. How unusual this extended comparison of mythical and historical events was we cannot say, but it is one of the most striking of such juxtapositions.

The contemporary and mythical can also be mixed in comic ways. Antiphanes' (if it is not Alexis') *Anteia* may have been a mixture of mythical burlesque concerning the daughter of Iobates and potential seducer of Bellerophon, and satire on a famous contemporary hetaera. Similarly, Nereus the cook and the mythical Nereus seem to be combined in Anaxandrides' *Nereus*, and Philetaerus' *Achilles* linked Peleus the potter with the mythical king Peleus (fr. 4). Intellectual matters also appear. In Timocles' *Heroes* we find Demosthenes improbably described as "the son of Briareus, who consumes catapults and spears, a man who hates words, and never used an antithesis in his life" (fr. 12). Satire on philosophers, of

[47] Though see Isoc. *Peace* 8.14; Plato *Laws* 935C; Aeschin. 1.157; S.D. Olson (2007, 126–128) on Heniochus fr. 5.

the kind found earlier in Aristophanes' *Clouds* or Ameipsias' *Konnos* is not uncommon: an intriguing fragment of Alexis' *Galateia* has someone, most probably Polyphemus, attending the Cynic Aristippus (fr. 37).

Finally, we may here for completeness bring in the "phlyax" plays of Rhinthon and Sopater.[48] Two or three of the dozen plays of the latter have mythological titles (*Hippolytus*, *Orestes*, and perhaps *Necyia*). The influence of Euripides is even more visible in the plays of the former, more of whose titles are mythological.[49] The ancient sources suggest that Rhinthon created a novel blend of tragedy and comedy, but what exactly it was is now lost: Stephanus of Byzantium (603 = T2) speaks of him "transforming tragedy into comedy," and Suidas (s.v. Ῥίνθων = T3) refers to hilarotragedy. Perhaps he stayed closer to the original tragedy than the Athenian comedians, who were by now making their gods and heroes reflections of ordinary folk.

c. *Structure and Meaning*

In Old Comedy, the structures of common myth types can be discerned as underlying the plots. This structuring can take a number of forms. The play may model itself in comic fashion on a myth type. Thus, in *Knights*, the struggle between the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon takes the form of a "gigantomachy," with a similar structure and details to more serious versions, such as that in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Each battle is also part of a succession myth, of gods (Uranus, Cronus, Zeus) or unappetizing politicians (hemp-, sheep-, leather-, and sausage-sellers). In each case, an oracle in the possession of the losing side offers a solution to the problem faced by the eventual winners: Gaia, mother of the Titans, gives an oracle to the Olympians telling them to recruit the Hundred-Handers to help them, and the slaves steal an oracle from Paphlagon, which reveals the need to find a Sausage-Seller. The figure crucial to the triumph is enticed onto the winning side by means of alluring gifts and the merits of those to be helped: nectar, ambrosia, and the intelligence of Zeus convince the Hundred-Handers, and the prospect of political dominion and the support of the "good" and "intelligent" win over the Sausage-Seller. The battle involves cosmic conflicts, with thunder and lightning, and turbulence on land and sea—real in Hesiod, metaphorical in the imagery of the

[48] Cf. Gigante (1971b); Taplin (1993, 48–54); S.D. Olson (2007, 13–16).

[49] *Amphitryon*, *Eunobatai*, *Heracles*, *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, *Doulos Meleagros*, *Medea*, *Orestes*, *Telephus*.

conflicts and insults in Aristophanes. The losers are relegated to disagreeable places: the Titans to Tartarus, and Paphlagon to drink bathwater in the Ceramicus.[50] The reign of the new ruler is inaugurated with allegorical figures, such as the Seasons, Eunomia, and Peace with Zeus, and the Spondai with the Sausage-Seller and the rejuvenated Demos. The parallelisms are striking, and Aristophanes reinforces them in the parabasis when the chorus praise him as worthy of their help, because "he goes out bravely against the whirlwind and the hurricane" (510–511). Furthermore, his explicit self-praise takes the form of a succession myth of comic poets, where he is the final culmination of a sequence comprising Magnes, Cratinus, and Crates (520–550). Poet and hero thus stand together as defenders of the city.

In *Clouds*, the Cloud-Chorus evokes various myths in which clouds are the vehicles for divine chastisement of erring mortals. When Hera complained that Ixion, having been taken into Olympus by Zeus to purify him from murder, had tried to seduce her, Zeus tested him out by making a simulacrum of Hera in the form of a cloud: when Ixion made an attempt on this, he was tied to a fiery wheel and sent through the universe as a warning to others. Ixion acted improperly, just as Strepsiades does in his attempts to escape payment of his debts. Athamas was married to the divine Nephele, but transferred his affections to the human Ino. Nephele blighted his land, and, when he consulted Delphi, Ino bribed the oracle to tell him to sacrifice his children by Nephele. They were saved by the ram with the golden fleece, and Nephele demanded the sacrifice of Athamas, from which he was saved by Heracles. Like Athamas, Strepsiades has an enviable marriage, and his dissatisfaction with it is punished. *Thesmophoriazusae* also reflects myths and legends concerned with the punishment of men who invade the Thesmophoria, a widespread festival in Greece. Herodotus tells of Miltiades trespassing on the shrine of Demeter Thesmophorus on Paros and his subsequent injury, disgrace, and death (6.134–139); and similar tales are told of Megarians who tried to abduct Athenian women from the festival[51] and of Battus of Cyrene.[52] Thus, in the play, Mnesilochus is punished for his intrusion, and Euripides is forced to abandon his characteristic form of tragedy,

[50] On the *pharmakos* ritual and this play, cf. Bennett and Tyrrell (1990, 235–254) and A.M. Bowie (1993, 45–77, 102–133, 78–101).

[51] Aen. Tact. 4.8–11; Plut. *Sol.* 8.

[52] Paus. 4.17.1.

which allegedly slanders women. In each case, the comedy replicates the moral meaning of the myth.

Finally, *Birds* tends overtly to represent the foundation of Nephelococcygia as a triumph over adversity and tiresome Olympian gods, but the evocation of the mythemes of foundation myths in a distorted form constantly suggests a different assessment. Bird guides are not uncommon, but the jackdaw and crow carried by Peisetaerus and Euelpides are not normal. Metamorphosis of animals into the new inhabitants is a frequent feature of foundation myths, as in the cases of the Spartoi who sprang from the dragon's teeth at Thebes or the ants who became the Myrmidons on Aegina. In *Birds*, however, the metamorphosis goes the other way about, as men become birds: the usual movement from nature to culture is reversed, and the pattern of the foundation is rather that of myths of punishment for the failure to live up to the norms of civilized human society. When sacrifice is made to the gods of the city, it is Poseidon who is picked out (868), the god who stands for nature rather than culture and who is regularly defeated in foundation myths by Athena, goddess of culture. Repeated abnormalities of this kind suggest that the new city is not the wonderful new creation that the words and actions continue to suggest.

This kind of analysis, whilst obviously possible for Middle and New Comedy, does not seem so fruitful: this is in part due to the nature of the surviving evidence, but also more to a shift in the kinds of plots involved, which I discussed above. One might, for instance, analyze Sostratus in Menander's *Dyscolus* in terms of the myths of rites of passage for young men (ephebes, in Athens). They are removed from their normal social position, enter a marginal world where they face various trials, and eventually triumph and win a wife and new status as, say, a king. The myths of Theseus, Jason, or Perseus are the most obvious examples. So, Sostratus is out hunting, a classic ephebic activity; the cave of Pan and the Nymphs is a place on the margins of society; he confronts the monstrous Cnemon, exchanges his rich clothing for a farmer's, and plays a role as a laborer, the opposite of the wealthy adult he will be; eventually he wins a wife. However, such an analysis does not especially illuminate the play, nor does it account for details of the plot or imagery, as is the case in Old Comedy.[53]

[53] See further the discussion of Cnemon at the end of the "Ritual Comedy" section following.

2. *Ritual Comedy*

By "ritual plays" I intend plays that are based on a particular festival or have a significant ritual element in them.[54] Once again, one must stress the enormous uncertainties in this area: titles can be very deceptive or ambiguous. For instance, we cannot tell whether Plato's *Adonis* was a parody of the myth or of the rituals of his followers. Old Comedies may have had much more ritual in them than their titles reveal: were it not extant, we might not have realized the importance in *Acharnians* of the Rural Dionysia and the Anthesteria,[55] and the title of *Frogs* gives no idea of the importance in it of the Eleusinian Mysteries. By contrast, in later comedy, the title may suggest a play belonged in this class, but refer in fact to a relatively marginal or circumstantial aspect of the action: to take a nonritual example, the shield in *Aspis* is important for setting the story in motion, but does not play a major part in the action. Allowing for this restated health warning, we can say that it is likely that, throughout Greek comedy, ritual plays seem to have formed roughly the same proportion of all the plays, around 5 percent.[56]

a. *Subject Matter*

i. *Old Comedy*

The use of ritual as the subject for comedy seems to go back to the earliest writers. Magnes' *Lydians* had references to "dream-interpreters" and "releasers from spells" (fr. 4) and to ritual acts (fr. 3): "you must wash and anoint with Lydian unguent." The following list of Old Comedies gives an idea of the sort of plays that involved ritual. It is of course very hard to distinguish plays that involved ritual activity simply as part of the plot and those where it played a major structural or narrative role:

> Aristomenes' *Miracle-Workers*; Aristophanes' *Hours*, *Frogs*, *Thesmophoriazusae I* and *II*;[57] Autocrates' *Tambourine-Players*; Cephisodorus' *Trophonius*; Crates' *Festivals*; Cratinus' *Delian Maidens*, *Euneidai*, *Thracian Women*, *Idaeans*, *Trophonius*; Diocles' *Bacchae*; Eupolis' *Dippers* (*Baptai*),[58]

[54] For a review of earlier work on religion in Aristophanes, cf. H. Hofmann (1976, 4–36).

[55] Cf. Fisher (1993); Habash (1995).

[56] V: 20/385; IV 20/485; IV/III 32/395; III-I 7/75.

[57] For the second play, cf. Austin and Olson (2004, lxxvii–lxxxix).

[58] On the problems of the meaning of this word, cf. R.C.T. Parker (1983, 306 n. 125).

New Moons; Lysippus' *Bacchae*, *Thyrsus-Keeper* (*Thursokomos*); Metagenes' *The Keen Sacrificer*; Nicophon's *Adonis*; Pherecrates' *Stove or All-Night Festival*; Philyllius' *Dodekate*, *Heracles*; Phrynichus' *Initiates*; Plato's *Adonis*, *Women Coming from Sacrifice*, *Festivals*.

Although we have seen that Dionysus is a not infrequent personage on stage, it is interesting that his cults (at least his official ones) are not so often the subject of comedies. When they are, it is the more private and enthusiastic versions that seem to be chosen. In fact, the number of candidates for this category is very small. There is Lysippus' *Bacchae*, which mocked Lampon as an *agurtes* ("magician", fr. 6)—that is, an unofficial miracle-working priest of the kind that polis religion came to suspect in the fifth century[59]—and Diocles' *Bacchae*, from which fragments contribute the verbs *gynaikizein* ("to act effeminately", fr. 4) and *enkomiazein* (in the sense of "be in love with", fr. 5). Lysippus' *Thyrsus-Keeper* is the only other possibility, but its existence is uncertain.

Plays involving cults with more exotic aspects and origins (not all easy to distinguish from "Dionysiac cults") are, however, more frequent. When dealing with such "unestablished" cults, comedy bears out Parker's conclusion that "native or foreign, the unlicensed god is exposed to suspicion, hostility, contempt, and the threat of actual repressive action."[60] We may include here the portrayal of Socrates in *Clouds*, where he has many of the characteristics of the magician:[61] he is in charge of "mysteries" (143), to which entry is gained by initiatory acts (250–274, 497–509), and he has connections with the divine world, through the Clouds. Eupolis' *Baptai*, which I have already discussed for its political aspect, concerned the cult of the Thracian goddess Cotyto, and the fragments talk of sacred plants (frr. 79, 84), the *rhombos* (fr. 83), and a devotee's skill in beating drums, playing the lyre, and dancing lasciviously (fr. 88).[62] According to Hesychius, the political element went beyond mockery of Alcibiades, since "Cratinus put on stage a ridiculous divinity because of his hatred of the Corinthians" (fr. 93), though how the play dealt with the Corinthians is unknown.

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[59] Cf. Burkert (1962). Aristomenes devoted a play to them, his *Goetes*.

[60] R.C.T. Parker (1996, 163, cf. 152–198) and Garland (1992) on "new" gods in Athens generally. The distinction "established"/"unestablished" is also Parker's (160), who points out that ecstatic practices were not exclusive to eastern cultures but appeared in Greek cult too. In the case of cults such as those of Cybele, it is not always easy to make a firm distinction in comedy between established and unestablished rites.

[61] A.M. Bowie (1993, 112–124).

[62] For Cotyto, cf. Juv. 2.91–92; V. Lozanova (1996); R.C.T. Parker (1996, 195).

Cratinus' *Thracian Women* (ca. 430) most probably had a chorus of female devotees of Bendis: we have her epithet *dilonkos* ("with two spears", fr. 85), *kubebos* (used of those inspired by the goddess, fr. 87), and *surbeneus* (used of riotous flute playing and choruses where free improvisation was practiced, fr. 89; cf. Athen. 697F). Note, however, that her cult was sufficiently established for it to appear in the accounts for the Treasurers of the Other Gods in 429/428.[63]

Cybele's cult also features. Cratinus' *Runaways*, dated to the 440s, mocks Lampon as an *agersikubelis* (lit. "axe collector", i.e., collector for sacrifice, sacrificer?), and perhaps also as an *agurtes* and *kubelistes* ("axe wielder"; cf. fr. 66, and perhaps fr. 352), all of which point to Cybele. His *Idaioi* may have concerned her devotees, the Corybantes: there was a shaving scene, like that in *Thesmophoriazusae* (fr. 90). The title of Autocrates' *Tambourine-Players* points to the *tumpanon*, an instrument connected with the cults of Dionysus and Cybele: fr. 1 describes seductive dances by Lycian girls for Ephesian Artemis. Finally, in Aristophanes' *Seasons*, foreign deities, including Sabazius, were put on trial and expelled from the city.[64] We can say little of Plato's *Women Come from Sacrifice*, Aristophanes' *The Women Pitch Their Tents* (if it belongs here), or Pherecrates' *Stove or Pannychis*, though the role of women in all these plays is notable, given Athenian reluctance to display or refer to citizen women publicly.[65]

One non-Athenian religious institution, the oracle of Trophonius at Lebadeia, was the subject of two plays, by Cephisodorus and Cratinus.[66] References in the first to unnecessarily luxurious unguents (fr. 3), and in the latter to prescribed wakefulness (frr. 233, 236) and sacred snakes (fr. 241), suggest parody of the elaborate regulations governing consultation of that oracle (cf. Paus. 9.39). Cratinus referred to men making money out of cunning use of language or rhetoric (fr. 239): if this referred to fraudulence in the oracle's officials, it would be reminiscent of Aristophanes' mockery of the corrupt aspects of divination in Athens.[67]

As for established Athenian festivals, apart from those we have mentioned, there is very little amongst the titles. Philyllius wrote two plays somehow related to the Anthesteria: *Heracles* contained a character called

[63] *IG* 1^3.383.143. Cf. Simms (1988); Garland (1991, 111–114 with pl. 26); R.C.T. Parker (1996, 170–175).
[64] Cf. Cic. *Legg.* 2.37.
[65] Cf. J.J. Henderson (2000, 135–150).
[66] Cf. Quaglia (2000); Bonnechère (1998).
[67] Cf. N. Smith (1989).

Dorpeia, a name for the first day, and the *Dodekate* takes its title from the second day. From extant plays, one may add the "domestic Panathenaea" in *Ecclesiazusae* and the rites in *Lysistrata*, both discussed below. In *Frogs*, various aspects of the Eleusinian Mysteries are evoked: we have a parody of the "Prorrhesis" summoning the Initiates (354 ff.), a processional hymn to Iacchus (316 ff., 399–416), the long journey the Initiates took (402–403), the insults humorously hurled from the bridge over the Cephisus (passim), hymns to Demeter and Persephone (386–395), a *pannychis* (371), a parodic image of the actual initiation process (911–920; cf. *H. Dem.* 194–201), and so on.[68] In *Wealth* 627–770, we have not the staging but a lengthy description of the rites in the shrine of Asclepius when Wealth is cured.

ii. *Middle and New Comedy*

When we turn to Middle and New Comedy, it appears that city festivals are rather more common, though the evidence is a little uncertain. We find a *Dionysiazusae* by Timocles (on which see below), and Ephippus wrote a *Peers or Obeliai-Bearers*, which refers to loaves called *obeliai* offered to Dionysus at the Dionysia. Menander's *Arrhephorus or the Aulos Girl* offers an unusually large total of nine fragments, but even so it is not clear what the play was about: the title yokes together two very different social types, the aristocratic girl who attended to Athena's *peplos* and the entertainer at the symposium. Similarly, we have a forty-three-line fragment of Dionysius' *Thesmophorus* (fr. 2), but it concerns only the difference between two types of cook, a *mageiros* and an *opsopoios*. As it happens, plays with names ending in *-phoros* (bearer) are not uncommon. To the four already discussed, we can add Eubulus' *Kalathephoroi* (*Basket-bearers*); the *Phialephoroi* (*Cup-bearers*) by Anaxandrides, which may have concerned the rites of the Great Mother; two plays called *Kanephoros* (*Basket-bearer*) by Anaxandrides and Menander; and a *Lampadephoroi* (*Torch-bearers*) by Philetaerus.

The Eleusinian Mysteries may have been the subject, or at least somehow connected, with a number of plays, such as Nicostratus' *Hierophant*. Greater uncertainty surrounds Antiphanes', Philemo's, and Philippides' *Mustis*: the word may refer to an Eleusinian or other kind of initiate or a person of that name. Antiphanes' play had an old woman praising a large drinking cup (fr. 161), a sympotic fragment (fr. 163), and the statement

[68] Cf. in general A.M. Bowie (1993, 228–238); Lada-Richards (1999); somewhat differently, R.G. Edmonds (2004, 2006). Also Suárez de la Torre (1997) and Perrone (2005).

that the gods prefer simple, cheap offerings (fr. 162), but further we cannot go. Finally, in an unknown play, Philippides criticized Stratocles for spin doctoring Demetrius' wish to go through all stages of initiation at once, rather than waiting a year for the second part (fr. 25):

> The man who reduced the year to a single month; who made the Acropolis into an inn and introduced *hetairai* to the Virgin Goddess; because of him the hoar-frost burnt the vines; because of his impiety, the *peplos* split in the middle, since he gave to men the honors that belong to the gods: that is what destroys democracy, not comedy.

By contrast with Old Comedy, in later comedy the number of plays about ritual activity by women seems to decline. I note only Philippides' *Adoniazusae* (cf. the three plays titled *Adonis* by Antiphanes, Ararus, and Philiscus) and Timocles' *Dionysiazusae*. The fragments of the former contain little more than a reference to a female garment, whereas the latter is represented by an interesting fragment on how tragedy, by depicting heroic misfortunes, makes the spectators' troubles seem less (fr. 6): "[T]he poor man sees Telephus become more beggarly than he and bears his poverty more easily; the man who suffers from an unsettled mind can contemplate Alcmeon; for someone who has problems with his eyes, there are the blind sons of Phineus," and so on. This fragment and the title might suggest that the Great Dionysia and its drama were involved. Was this then a play like the *Thesmophoriazusae*, which made fun of an imaginary situation of women engaged in unusual activities? If so, it would have been similar to Alexis' *Gynaecocratia* (there was also one by Amphis), which again had women in the theatre (fr. 42): "Now you've got to sit and watch on the outside section of the theatre, like foreign women." There were also three plays, by Eubulus, Hipparchus, and Alexis, called *Pannychis*, a type of festival that was primarily for women, but at which men could be present: sex and drink dominate the few fragments.

Finally in this section, we come to the unofficial cults. At least three plays seem to involve the more riotous cults of Cybele (if we may include her here amongst the unestablished cults). Alexis' *Theophoretus* uses as its title a word that was applied specifically to the devotees of that cult, and a fragment describes one who might well be such a devotee (fr. 91): "I think some of those I meet criticize me for wandering about drunk at such a time. For goodness's sake, what sort of torch is that, as bright as the most delightful sun?" We need not, however, think that all references to the cult of deities like Cybele were necessarily hostile. In Menander's *Theophorumene*, two young men test whether a girl is possessed by Cybele by getting a piper to play suitable music (15 ff.). The

girl sings a hymn in which the references to "sweet-faced Corybantes," "Phrygian Queen," "drums," "Mountain Mother," and Agdistis all suggest the cult of Cybele. The tone of the hymn is not easy to gauge, given that only half lines remain, but it does not appear particularly parodic: the girl apparently shifts between singing and speaking, and then the young men join in, but without mockery, it seems. Menander's *Priestess* I discuss more fully below, but we can note here that someone in the play did criticize the use of Cybele's rites for healing, but the rest of the evidence for the play does not suggest its main purpose was to satirize the rites (fr. 188): "Dear wife, no god saves one man through the agency of another. If a man can make a god do what he wants by clashing cymbals, he is more powerful than the god. But these are the instruments of recklessness and violence, devised by shameless people, Rhode, and forged so they can mock our life."

Three plays show an interest in ithyphallic deities whose worship had strong sexual overtones: Eubulus' *Orthannes*, Xenarchus' *Priapus*, and Timocles' *Conisalus*.[69] The fragments, though largely concerned with food and drink, tell us little: Eubulus fr. 75 is a riddling fragment with sexual overtones about preparations, presumably for a celebration of the god. Amphis' *Dithyrambus* and Antiphanes' *Carian Girl* seem to have involved orgiastic musical celebration, lamentatory in the latter case. The continued existence of plays about unofficial cult may have been reinforced by the considerable increase in noncitizen associations worshipping such "foreign" gods in the late fourth and first half of the third centuries.[70]

The activities of various types of magician-priest also occupied a number of plays. We have Alexis' *Manteis*, Philemo's *Agurtes*, and a *Menagurtes* from both Antiphanes and Menander, the latter involving a miraculous cure by anointing (fr. 152): "He told the girl to take ointments from the goddess and to anoint first his feet and then his knees. As soon as she touched his feet and rubbed them, he leapt up." A fragment of Anaxandrides' *Pharmacomantis* praises *alazoneia* ("mischief") as second only to *kolakeia* ("flattery"), the *alazoneia* was presumably that of the *mantis*, which no doubt gives a flavor of the treatment of these men.

Finally, as in Aristophanes' *Plutus*, the more "conventional" medicine of Asclepius figured in Antiphanes' *Asclepius*; and in Alexis' *The Woman*

[69] Kassel-Austin on Ar. fr. 325.
[70] R.C.T. Parker (1996, 266, 338–339).

Drugged with Mandrake-Root, there are complaints about people's preference for foreign (here Spartan) doctors (fr. 146).

To conclude, the fascination with groups of women onstage that we find in Old Comedy seems to diminish; as with mythology, specifically Athenian ritual activity seems to be more popular; and later comedy continues Old Comedy's mockery of the more unusual ritual activity of orgiastic cults and miracle-working priests.

b. *Structural Uses*

i. *Old Comedy*

As in tragedy, there is, as a reflection of ordinary life, a good deal of religious activity in comedy. What I am interested in here, however, includes those cases where ritual has a more significant, often structural, function in the plays. This happens in various ways.

The evocation of a ritual may mark a key moment in a drama. For instance, in *Ecclesiazusae* 730–744 we have a "Panathenaic" procession of pots and pans:

> Fair Flour-sieve, first of my household goods, march out finely, to be a powdered Basket-Bearer; many is the sack of flour you've gobbled down. Where is the Chair-Bearer? Pot, come out here—by heavens, you're black, more than if you'd used Lysicrates' hair-dye!—stand by her. Come here, the maid. Pitcher-Bearer, bring that pitcher here. Out you come, musician, your ill-timed morning chorus has often got me up for the Assembly at night. Let the one with the bowl come forward. Bring the honey-combs, put the branches near by and bring out the tripod and oil-flask.

In the actual Panathenaic procession, *kanephoroi*, *diphrophoroi*, *hydriaphoroi*, and *skaphephoroi* marched, and the branches point to the *thallophoroi*, the distinguished older men who also marched. Here, however, it is not Athens' finest who are parading, but a man's possessions, destined to be divided up amongst everyone under the new communistic regime. It was the function of the Panathenaea, as the great festival of the first month of the year, to mark a new start, and so too in the play this comic Panathenaea takes place as a new world is inaugurated. However, the presence of these kitchen items symbolizes the impending dominance of the oikos over the polis and the topsy-turvy world this entails.

The structure of a ritual and its attendant myths may underlie all or part of the action of the play, as in *Thesmophoriazusae*.[71] The Thes-

[71] Cf. Zeitlin (1981); A.M. Bowie (1993, 204–227); Bierl (2001); Tzanetou (2002); Austin and S.D. Olson (2004, xlv–li and passim).

mophoria was a festival for women only, which celebrated the loss and return of Persephone. The women gathered together apart from the men, and the political institutions of the city came to a halt: in a way, the women took over the city, indulging in activities that they were normally largely excluded from, such as political organization, blood sacrifice, and obscene language and acts. The play is set on the second day of the festival, the *Nesteia* ("Day of Fasting"), when the women imitated Demeter's grief at her daughter's loss by fasting and sitting on antaphrodisiac plants. The play reflects a number of aspects of the festival. The women had their own political organization for the period, led by *archousai*, the female equivalent of the male *archontes*, and this is transformed by Aristophanes into a full-blown assembly, imitating the male institution, which puts Euripides on trial (295–570). The women's somewhat unusual involvement in blood sacrifice is parodied by the sacrifice, involving the language of blood sacrifice, of Mika's "child," which turns out to be a wineskin (688–764). Their public indulgence in obscene language and the handling of models of genitals is given free reign, the latter in the chasing of Mnesilochus' phallus back and forth as his sex is determined (635–654). The search for male intruders (655–687) is probably in imitation of the ritual search for Persephone.

The whole play can also be said to enact a similar regeneration of the city to that effected by the festival. The festival dramatized the movement from a period of dissolution, social dislocation, sexual abstinence or abnormality, and political inactivity to a reuniting of husband and wife and the restoration of normal existence. In the same way, the play represents a city in which Euripidean tragedy—with its obscenity, domestic disruption, and disordered sexuality—has caused disruption and dislocation in the homes of the Athenians. It has, in effect, made the city into a kind of mass Thesmophoria. The action of the play then regenerates the city by abolishing that kind of tragedy and celebrating at the end, like the festival, the reunion of husband and wife.[72] Aristophanes thus not only makes humorous use of the features of the Thesmophoria he puts on stage, but also uses them as a commentary on the action and an indication of the questions with which the play is concerned.

[72] Aristophanes' second *Thesmophoriazusae* was based on the third day, the *Calligeneia*, which celebrated the reunion and restoration of normality: a nurse called Calligeneia spoke the prologue (fr. 331), and the fragments contain references suitable to such reunions.

This can also be done by having more than one festival in the play. In *Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis' private treaty with Sparta is inaugurated by his family celebrating the Rural Dionysia. This immediately marks his new existence as anomalous: the Rural Dionysia was a deme festival, not one that a single family could perform. Dicaeopolis thus isolates himself in a world of peace and plenty, and this prepares us for the portrayal of him as ultimately interested in his own comfort, not the good of the generality. By contrast, the end of the play is structured around the Choes day of the Anthesteria festival, the myth of which told of how Orestes, polluted by the murder of his mother, was accepted into the city during the festival: to avoid polluting the festival, King Demophon sat Orestes at his own table for the sympotic celebrations and, so that he should not be embarrassed, made everyone else sit at their own table. In each case, a problematic outside is successfully integrated into the city. At the same time, the fact that the figure of Telephus, earlier used to evoke our sympathy for Dicaeopolis, is now transferred to the despised soldier Lamachus—by having him, when defending the city, wounded exactly as Telephus was while defending his land against the Troy-bound Greeks—prevents the reintegration of Dicaeopolis from being unproblematic.

Typical myth types sometime underpin a play. *Lysistrata* is modeled on myths of women in power (gynaecocracies), and *Birds* on myths of city foundation. *Knights*, with its story of the inexperienced Sausage-Seller's defeat of the fearsome Paphlagonian slave, thinly disguised as the contemporary politician Cleon, in a competition for the position of protector old Demos, combines the patterns of gigantomachy myths and myths of rites of passage of Greek youths (ephebes, in Athens).[73] The Sausage-Seller's victory has the same structure as Zeus' defeat of the powers of chaos in Hesiod's *Theogony* (820–885), and his move from base obscurity to high political office replicates the pattern of the myth of, say, the young Theseus or Perseus from marginality to kingship.

Such patterns can be used in more complex ways, which again provide commentary on the play's action. In *Wasps*, Philocleon undergoes a double "rite of passage." In the early part of the play, he passes symbolically through the three stages of youth, maturity, and old age; but in the play as a whole, he moves from old man to youth. In the open-

[73] On ephebic myth and ritual in Aristophanes, cf. 157–158 above and Orfanos (2006).

ing scenes, he is surrounded by imagery associated with the ephebe in the Greek *imaginaire*, nets, night, animals, trickery. In the scene of battle against Bdelycleon and his eastern slaves, the imagery is that of the hoplite. Finally, there is a debating contest about Philocleon's power as an old juror. In each of these "contests," Philocleon is defeated: it is as if he is being stripped of all status and reduced to nothing.

His renewal is inaugurated by the domestic trial of the dog that stole the cheese. This scene constitutes the kind of topsy-turvy world in which status transition takes place: elements of the oikos are turned into elements of the law courts of the polis, animals and objects come to life, and all is presided over by Lycus, a figure from the courts whose name evokes the wolf, a classic animal of transition. Philocleon is then stripped of his cloak and shoes, which marked him as an Athenian juror, and clad in new garments from Persia and Sparta, the antithesis of his former status. From now on, he behaves like a young man not yet constrained by the city's laws and in need of instruction in the ways of the aristocratic symposium—as, in effect, an ephebe again. In a complex way, therefore, Philocleon is moved from age to youth, and the various guises in which he appears prompt reflection on the appropriate behavior of the Athenian. If Philocleon is apparently scandalous as a juror, then his lawless behavior after his transformation might seem to be even worse. That the transformation through the reverse *ephebeia* is not to be applauded is then reinforced by the parabasis, in which the chorus of wasp-jurors praise themselves for their defeat of the Persians and their defense of the city though their participation in the courts (1071–1090, 1102–1121): a different evaluation of the contribution to the city by the old jurors thus contrasts with that presented by the action. The question is raised whether Bdelycleon's actions are as praiseworthy as the play seems to suggest: perhaps the Attic wasp belongs in the courts arraigning (if a little enthusiastically) those who have not the city's interests at heart. The reversal of the mythic pattern wrought by his son, it is suggested, goes against nature.

The evocation of individual rituals can also give greater depth and complexity to individual scenes, as can be illustrated by two consecutive scenes from *Lysistrata*. First, when the women bind themselves by an oath, Lysistrata says, "Put a large, black drinking-cup face-upwards on the ground, and when we've sacrificed a *stamnos* of Thasian wine let's swear not to pour water into the cup" (195–197). The fascination with drink may seem to be merely the comic topos of the tippling woman, but the scene also evokes two further institutions, which again give it a

contrasting positive quality. A series of Attic red-figure "Lenaea" vases[74] depict women around a *stamnos* conducting a rite in a dignified manner: we do not know what the rite is, but it does look as though the idea of "women around a *stamnos*" could evoke serious ritual activity of some sort. The women's oath to abstain from sex echoes the very august oath that, at the Anthesteria, the wife of the Archon Basileus administered to the "Honorable Women" before she entered into a sacred marriage with Dionysus: "I am pure and undefiled and untouched especially by congress with a man."[75] The double characterization of this scene, then, is an indication of how we should consider the women's actions in staging the strike to make peace: scandalous and yet in the interests of all.

Faraone has shown how the subsequent scene in which the Old Women douse the flames brought by the Old Men against the acropolis is not just slap-stick but also heavily instinct with symbolic meaning.[76] He starts from scenes in which the dousing of fires saves from the pyre mythical heroes and heroines such as Heracles or Alcmena, which can be paralleled in a variety of mystic texts where they stand for the salvation of the initiand. This motif is transferred in *Lysistrata* to the salvation, first of the Young Women threatened by the Old Men, and then of the men themselves, as the Women give them a "nuptial bath" (378): note how their fire turns against the men (296–301). The play thus plots the necessity of reviving these old Marathon fighters to political and sexual potency for the salvation (*soteria*) of the city, a prominent theme in the civic discourse of these years and in the play. This water-bearing forms one of the many female tasks to which the play gives symbolic meaning, and the ritual schemata evoked thus contrast with the apparent scandal of the women's behavior and demand a reevaluation of the audience's immediate responses to it.

ii. *Middle and New Comedy*

In later comedy, things are rather different, at least as far as we can tell from Menander. Though, as in earlier comedy, there are scenes of sacrifice, prayer, suppliance lament, reference to festivals, and so on, ritual plays a different, less complex structural role. This can be seen from *Samia*. A festival provides the motivation for the play's action, as Mos-

[74] Cf. Burkert (1983, 230–238); Philippaki (1967, esp. xix–xxi).
[75] Dem. 59.78.
[76] Faraone (1997; for another example, cf. 2005).

chion tells how he raped a girl at the Adonia: "The festival, as you might imagine, was causing a lot of fun, and I became a kind of spectator; their noise kept me awake, because they were carrying their 'gardens' onto the roof, dancing and making a night of it, scattered all over" (41–46). That it was the Adonia adds a touch of realism, but this festival seems to have no further significance: the play does not, for instance, imitate the structure or meanings of the festival.[77] *Sicyonioi* gives a greater significance to a festival. It is set in or near Eleusis and concerns the recovery of the identity of an Athenian girl who was abducted by pirates. The abduction points to the Eleusinian myth of Persephone, also abducted by Hades, and W.G. Arnott suggests she may have spoken the prologue. The girl takes refuge in the propylaea of the shrine (189), and "Eleusinius" recounts the debate over her fate. Despite the parallel of the abduction and the significant name, however, the plot is not especially close in its details to the Eleusinian myth.

Dyscolus is more complex ritually. The action is centered geographically on a shrine of Pan and the Nymphs, though again there is no particular appropriateness to the choice of their cave at Phyle. Early in the play, the Girl comes with a vessel for water, but one cannot easily give the scene the kind of complex meanings discovered by Faraone for the similar action in *Lysistrata*. Nonetheless, these deities do shape the action:[78] they reward Cnemon's daughter's piety by making Sostratus fall in love with her when she is garlanding the Nymphs' shrine (51); they send a dream to Sostratus' mother, which brings the two families together (407–418); when the Nurse drops the bucket down the well, the Girl has to come to the Nymph's shrine, where it so happens that Sostratus is, having come to see her father (189 ff.); and Cnemon's tumble into the well is not implausibly ascribed by Sicon to the reactions of the gods and Nymphs to Cnemon's refusal of utensils for the sacrifice (639–646). This sacrifice, though it ultimately unites all the people in the play (cf. 554–562), does not have the complexities of signification that we found in Old Comedy. Cnemon's refusal of the loan of a cooking pot (*lebetion*) means that Sicon has to forego the usual and preferred boiling or braising of the sacrificial meat and must use an unusual dish for the cooking, the *lopas*, normally used for fish; but this abnormality does not have especial significance

[77] For other festival rapes, cf. *Citharistes* 93–97; *Epitrepontes* 451–452; *Phasma* 194 ff.; *Synaristosai* fr. 1.

[78] On different types of divine involvement in Menander, cf. Zagagi (1994, 142–168).

or render the sacrifice problematic. Such mild abnormalities have comic rather than religious significance.[79]

One could, it is true, analyze Cnemon's career as a rite of integration. He begins in a "marginal" situation: his deme, Phyle, lies near the boundary of Attica; the land is stony and barely fertile (1–4), and he avoids cultivating that part nearest the public highway (163–165); his temper means he is socially isolated, and he is without a wife, slave, hired hand, or neighbor (22, 329–331); and the absence of sacrificial implements in his house (473–475, 505–507) signifies his separation from normal human intercourse and sharing, symbolized by participation in sacrifice. His neighboring gods, Pan and the Nymphs, are associated with the marginal areas of the countryside and are worshipped in caves. Like the person involved in status transition, he could be said to undergo various "trials" in the course of the play. His fall into the well is almost a ritual bath: it is a cardinal moment for Cnemon's change of attitude (cf. 710 ff.), and descents generally form part of rites of status transition. At the end of the play, albeit reluctantly, Cnemon is reintegrated into society, when he[80] joins the sympotic celebration of the wedding of his daughter (cf. 903: "we must civilize [*hemeroteos*] him"). The main difference between such a reading and those possible with *Wasps* or *Knights* is that in the latter cases a great deal more of the play is given significance, and problematic aspects of the play can be accounted for: in the case of *Dyscolus*, the religious structure is, whilst discernible, not especially revealing.

The ancient plot summary of Menander's *Priestess* allows a further fragmentary insight into how ritual may have helped to structure the plots of New Comedy.[81] Long before the play's action, a man raped a girl, who subsequently became a priestess of Cybele. When he is suffering from some illness, unbeknown to himself, he visits his former victim for healing (43–49; trans. Arnott): "Having recovered his health, he tried to look for his beloved son. A male house slave was won over and brought to the priestess, pretending demonic possession, in order to be accorded treatment without anybody else knowing. Having been won over he tracked down the truth." Though possession was enacted, the plot clearly did not center on the ritual aspect, but concerned characteristically

[79] Cf. Polemon's sacrifice in *Periceiromene*, carried out in haste just before his betrothal: "the basket can be prepared later. Get this pig slaughtered—no, better, I'll do it myself, and I'll take a garland from the altar and put that on" (997–1000).

[80] Cf. Lada-Richards (1999, 53–55).

[81] Cf. W.G. Arnott, Loeb 3.618–625, cf. 635–637.

involuted family relations. A son was born from the rape and brought up as her own by a neighbor, who herself had a son and daughter; the priestess had a daughter by another man. Confusion of identity and a triple marriage eventually ensued. In comparison with Old Comedy, it would perhaps be more accurate to say that the ritual aspect is the background rather than the structure of the play.

c. *Comedy and the Symposium*

i. *Old Comedy*

A striking feature of Old Comedy is the way that the imagery and elements of the symposium—its initial libations and prayers and formalized socializing—have important structuring roles.[82]

In "war" plays, the symposium frequently acts as a polar opposite to conflict. This is seen most simply in *Peace*. The return of Peace and her marriage to the vinously named Trygaeus is celebrated in sympotic songs by the chorus. When arms dealers appear to complain about the effect of peace on their trade, Trygaeus turns weapons into sympotic paraphernalia: for instance, the military trumpet, filled with lead and with a stick in, it could become equipment for the *kottabos*, a sympotic game involving throwing drops of wine at a small plate (*plastinx*) on top of a rod on the top of a tripod (1242–1244).[83]

The symposium is also used as an index of the moral health of society or individuals. In *Clouds*, the effects of the training in the new philosophy manifest themselves at a symposium held by Strepsiades and his son to mark the latter's "graduation" (1354–1358, 1364–1367):

> When we'd dined, as you remember, I first told him to take up the lyre and sing Simonides' song of how the Ram was shorn. He immediately replied that it was old-fashioned to play the lyre and sing when drinking, as if one were an old woman milling parched barley … Then I told him at least to take up the myrtle-branch and sing me something by Aeschylus. Quick as a flash, he said: "Yes, I think Aeschylus is the top poet—for bombast, uncouthness, turgidity and big words."

The new philosophy thus disrupts traditional modes not just of thinking but also of social intercourse, and the breakdown in Strepsiades' household is marked by a breakdown in sympotic activity. Later, Strepsiades'

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[82] Cf. also E.L. Bowie (1995); Fisher (2000), A.M. Bowie (1997) and Wilkins (2000, 202–256); Konstantakos (2005, 183–217); Pütz (2007).

[83] Compare the casting aside of the *kottabos* pole and plate as a sign of impending war in Hermippus *Fates* fr. 48 and the lengthy comparison of preparations for war and for the

return to proper behavior and beliefs is symbolized by his realization that a *dinos* is not the philosopher's "divine whirl," ruling in place of Zeus, but simply a wine vessel: "[W]hat a fool I was to think that you, a pottery vessel, were a god!" (1473–1474), he says to the wine jar set up outside Socrates' school.

Ecclesiazusae uses the symposium in a more complex manner. After the women have voted themselves into power, they effectively turn the polis into an oikos: the law courts, stoas, and rostrum will become dining rooms where in the past men alone gathered, and the machines that used to allot men to the courts will now determine where they eat (675–688). The women will provide all that is necessary and "everyone will take his torch and go home drunk with a garland on his head" (691–692). This new world is essentially communistic, and the equality of the drinkers around the krater, sharing equally in the food and wine, is a good symbol of such a world. All is not so straightforward, however, since citizen women, normally forbidden to attend a symposium, will displace the hetairai as the entertainment at the symposium (718–724). This reversal mirrors other changes to sexual mores, whereby the old and less favored will have first turn with the young and attractive, as is graphically illustrated by the fate of a young man who is on a komos—the post-sympotic rush through the city with torches to the home of a lover—and is carried off by the ugliest of three women who compete for his favors (938–1111). The scene seems to deconstruct the presentation of the new sympotic city as a haven of delights by working through the logic of reversal to show how these reversals of normal life entail a world where pleasure is offset by institutions that will produce a "land of Oedipuses" (1042). This play does not allow the simple equation found in other plays whereby the symposium represents an ideal model or a natural closure to a play. It criticizes, in a way, a whole aspect of comic mythmaking: turning society on its head does not solve its problems.

ii. *Middle and New Comedy*

As with rituals generally, this mode of analysis seems more appropriate to Old than to later Comedy. Sympotic celebration of weddings is a common feature especially of the end of plays,[84] and there are very many references

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symposium in *Ach.* 1085–1141. The *kottabos* was not infrequently performed onstage: cf. Plato frr. 46 and 71; Rosen (1995, 125); Nesselrath (1990a, 234).

[84] Cf. *Misoumenos* 989 ff., *Samia* 673 ff., 726 ff. (and 122 ff. for Moschion's fantasy), *Sicyonioi* 418 f.

to dining and the symposium, but in general, from the available evidence, the symposium does not have the same importance as a structuring feature or a means whereby the progress of the action or the moral status of the characters can be judged. The end of *Dyscolus* does operate in a way similar to the Old Comedy examples, though it is still not as complex. After the marriages of Sostratus and the Girl, and Gorgias and Sostratus' sister have been arranged, it is decided to have a party: "[W]e must have a fine party, father, and the women a *pannychis*" (855–857). The scene of requesting the cooking pot is then replayed by Sicon and Getas (885 ff.). This time they make repeated requests for a whole range of dining gear—cooking pots, basins, tripods, tables, rugs, a curtain, and finally a krater: objects from the symposium beset, as it were, Cnemon on every side. Sicon then describes at length and in highly poetic terms the partying and symposium that is taking place in the cave (935–953; cf. 940–941, 943, 946–948; trans. W.G. Arnott): "And there was I arranging for the men here a little party … All was bustle. I was fixing a straw couch on the ground, and laying tables … Now a hoary patriarchal vintage was tipped into a dimpled urn by hand of one who merged it with naiad springs, then pledged the men all round the cave." Cnemon eventually allows himself to be dragged to the party, in a way he refused to be when the sacrifice was performed earlier; torches and garlands are brought on and one of the latter is given to Cnemon (964). His separation from humankind—which was marked by his geographical isolation, his complaints about his divine neighbors, and his absence from the sacrifice—is now overcome by his symbolic (if reluctant) incorporation into society through the symposium in the cave of Pan and the Nymphs.

Coda

My survey is at an end. I have found that mythological and ritual comedy declined in popularity through the history of Greek comedy. However, comic figures from mythology—especially the satyrs who played an important role in comedy's early days—and the symposium continued to have a significant role in private and public life. In the fourth and especially the third centuries, comic figures and masks decorated many a symposium-room, as the theatre gained an increasingly privileged position in daily life: big theatres were built, guilds of actors and comic poets multiplied, and comic satyrs were depicted more and more in non-theatrical scenes on vases (cf. J.R. Green [1994], 89–104). In

public life, perhaps the most spectacular instance was the procession and banqueting pavilion created by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (d. 246 BCE). Callistratus' account is preserved by Athenaeus (196Aff.).[85] The banqueting pavilion had "sympotic gatherings facing each other in its upper parts, consisting of tragic, comic and satyric figures, wearing authentic clothes, with golden cups before them" (Athen. 196F). In the procession, Silens led the way, keeping the crowd back, followed by torch-bearing Satyrs. Further back, forty Satyrs with ivy crowns of gold and painted bodies were followed by two Silens, with petasos, golden caduceus, and trumpet. After figures representing the Year, the Five-Year Festival, and the Seasons, there were more Satyrs with purple cloaks and *oenochoe* and *karkhesios*, amongst whom went the comic poet Philiscus and all the Artists of Dionysus. A wagon then bore a statue of Dionysus ten cubits high and pouring libations. This was followed by a huge Laconian crater and a golden table with a thurible and *phialai* of cassia and saffron. "Covering these was an arbor, decorated with ivy, vines and other autumn fruits. Attached to it were garlands and ribbons and thyrsi and drums and *mitrai*, as well as satyric, comic and tragic masks" (198D). At the end were more Silens and Satyrs, with sympotic implements, and, not surprisingly, yet further Satyrs and Silens played an important role in the tableau of Dionysus' return from India. Comedy, myth, ritual, and symposium all unite in a spectacular public display.

[85] Cf. Rice (1983).

PART TWO

HISTORY

CHAPTER SIX

ORIGINS AND FIFTH-CENTURY COMEDY

Ian C. Storey

1. *Origins*

Aristotle, writing about 150 years after the canonical date for the first official performance of comedy (486 BC), comments that "because it was not taken seriously, the origins of comedy have been forgotten" (*Poetics* 1449a38), and there one might leave the matter, except for some tantalising bits of evidence that allow us to push back the curtain slightly and make some reasonable educated guesses about where comedy came from and what influences operated on it in its formative years. Unlike tragedy, with Old Comedy we have only one surviving dramatist, Aristophanes (career: 427 to ca. 385), who began to compete about sixty years after the canonical date for comedy. In tragedy we can trace a development from the grander chorus-based dramas of Aeschylus to the more realistic dramas of Euripides, where the characters and the actors that play them occupy more of the attention.[1] But for comedy only the last two plays show any signs of a change in that genre, and the early plays of Aristophanes show a comedian already at the top of his game and do not help us very much with the early history of comedy. The evidence that we do have comes from three sources: (a) the literary testimony of Aristotle and other ancient writers on drama, (b) visual evidence from vases and sculpture, and (c) the surviving plays themselves plus title and major fragments of lost plays, although much of this evidence is as late as the period of Aristophanes' ascendancy.

Literary evidence begins with Aristotle's *Poetics* (ca. 330), about which a basic question needs to be posed at the very beginning: does Aristotle know what he is talking about? He did write an earlier work called *Didaskalia* ("Production Lists"), for which he must have access to the

[1] Csapo (2004) has shown how in the late fifth century, more and more of the lyrics are sung by the actors rather than the chorus.

official record of dramatic productions at Athens. He studied with Plato, who will have sat in the theatre and watched the plays of Euripides and Aristophanes, as well as later tragic and comic poets. He will have himself been present at the Athenians dramatic productions in the fourth century. But on the other hand, when it comes to the history of tragedy or comedy, on what is he relying for his authoritative statements?

On comedy he makes the following points (*Poetics* 1448b29–1449b20): (1) the etymology of comedy (κωμῳδία) is already a matter of dispute, either from κώμη + ᾠδή (village song) or (as is generally accepted today) from κῶμος + ᾠδή (revel song); (2) some sort of Dorian origin was claimed for Athenian comedy, in part because of the existence of something called "Megarian comedy", in part because of the influence of the Sicilian comic poet Epicharmos, and in part because of the claim that comedy comes from κώμη + ᾠδή (village song) κώμη being the Dorian word for "village"; (3) both comedy and tragedy derive genealogically from the poetry of Homer—tragedy from the serious epics (*Iliad*, *Odyssey*) and comedy from the burlesque of epic, the *Margites* attributed to Homer;[2] (4) while tragedy comes "from those who led the dithyramb", comedy was developed "by those [who led] the phallic dances [τὰ φαλλικά]" and did so through an evolution from improvisation to formal performance, the stages of which are unknown; and (5) comedy originally shared much with ἴαμβος, the earlier poetry of personal insult, and only later developed what we would call plots.[3]

Aristotle does not give us cause for too much optimism, since he has provided two independent traditions about the early history of comedy: something that developed from a primitive choral performance (τὰ φαλλικά), and an art form that evolved as a literary genre from Homer and from the ἴαμβος. We may further wonder what Aristotle's evidence for the former explanation was. Did he have any firm evidence for seeing the ancestors of tragedy and comedy as choral performance? If he had reasonable grounds for his connection of tragedy with the dithyramb, the statement about τὰ φαλλικά as the ancestor of comedy may just be the result of an attempt to find a counterpart for comedy. His description of τὰ φαλλικά "which remain even today in some cities" may suggest that direction. Handley's summary remains a valid statement of Aristotle on

[2] This is likely to have been Aristotle's own contribution to the debate.

[3] On personal insult and abuse in Old Comedy, see the studies of Rosen (1988), Degani (1993), Storey (1998), Zanetto (2001), several of the essays in Ercolani (2002), Cottone (2005), Ercolani (2006), and Zimmermann (2006b).

the early history of comedy: "Aristotle's derivation of comedy is a hypothesis which is interesting and possibly correct, but he does not offer, and we cannot adequately supply, the means by which it might be verified".[4]

At first sight the business about a Dorian ancestry for comedy sounds like a promising lead, but Aristotle makes it clear that he is reflecting the conflicting opinions of others, who were working backward from the evidence available (*Poetics* 1449a29–36):

> The Dorians even lay claim to both tragedy and comedy—in the case of comedy both by the mainland Megarians that it came into being during their democracy and by those in Sicily, since Epicharmos (a poet much earlier than Chionides and Magnes) came from there, and in the case of tragedy by certain of the Peloponnesians. As proof they adduce the names, for the Dorians argue they call villages κῶμαι while the Athenians call them δῆμοι and comic performers [κωμῳδοί] are so called, not from revelling [κωμάζειν] from their wandering from village to village [κῶμαι].

Old Comedy does mention in a demeaning manner something called Megarian Comedy (*Wasps* 58 + Σ; Ekphantides fr. 3; Eupolis fr. 261), but the point is more likely an antithesis between sophisticated Athenian comedy and vulgar Megarian Comedy. It does not have to mean that Megarian Comedy was something earlier or even an ancestor of Old Comedy.[5]

Epicharmos was certainly active before the canonical date of 486, and the extant fragments, though scanty, do show a comedian of some ability.[6] But did he influence comedy in Athens? We know that Aeschylus travelled at least twice to Sicily and produced plays there, but did comedy travel the other way? The fragments of Epicharmos suggest a comedy unlike that of stereotypical Old Comedy, one based on social themes and burlesques of myth, with few, if any, political themes and personal jokes. If Epichamos did have any effect on early Old Comedy, his influence was not long-lived.

The other writers on Old Comedy provide little that is of any value. They are collected in Koster "Prolegomena", of which the most useful are the two treatises of Platonios (Koster I, II), a series of encyclopaedic entries (III), the prolegomena to Tzetzes (XIa), the anonymous Crameri (XIb–c), the Tractatus Coislinianus (XV), the scholiast to Dionysius Thrax (XVIII), the poems of Tzetzes (XXI), Diomedes'

[4] Handley (1985, 111).

[5] On Megarian comedy see Breitholz (1960, 176–187), MacDowell (1971, 136).

[6] On Epicharmos see Storey and Allan (2005, 195–197), Bosher (2006), and S.D. Olson (2007, 33–68).

Ars Grammatica (XXIV), Evanthius' *de Fabula* (XXV), and the lives of Aristophanes (XXVII–XXIX). These are of a late date, singularly unoriginal and uncritical, and present as fact certain tales and stereotypes about comedy—for example, that comedy was created by certain farmers wronged by city folk; that the name *comedy* comes from *village* + *song*; that comedy had three firm and distinct divisions: Old, Middle, and New; that comedy can be directly related to the political climate; and that the origin and demise of the genre may be explained by accounting for the presence and absence of its quintessential feature, τὸ ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν (to make fun of by name).

The visual evidence consists of two sorts of vases containing scenes and characters that have been viewed as the ancestors of Old Comedy. First are about twenty vases from 560–480 depicting men dressed up as beasts or associated with animals, celebrating some public occasion. Some of these vases feature an αὐλητής (piper), a clear sign that a public performance is being displayed. These show men dressed as birds, armed men mounted on other men dressed as horses,[7] and men riding on dolphins or ostriches. Old Comedy is well known for its plays with theriomorphic choruses (Aristophanes' *Birds* and *Storks*, Krates' *Beasts*, Kratinos' *Cheirons*, Archippos' *Fishes*, Eupolis' *Goats*),[8] and it has been argued that this element of Old Comedy can be traced directly to animal choruses such as those seen on these vases. But animal choruses do not form a large part of extant Old Comedy, and the most that we may conclude is that these performances in animal guise may be part of the ancestry of Old Comedy, but they are not the whole story.[9]

Certain Corinthian vases of the late seventh and sixth centuries depict dancers (komasts), who seem to be dancing as part of a group or chorus. Some of these are grotesquely depicted, while others (later ones) are certainly phallic. They do remind one of the comic performers that we see two hundred years later on the so-called *phlyax* vases of Southern Italy. It was generally thought that these represented the perform-

[7] Here we encounter the intriguing possibility that Aristophanes' *Knights* had a chorus of twelve cavalrymen mounted on twelve other men costumed as horses; this makes their eulogy of their steeds at *Knights* 595–610 rather pointed.

[8] To these we may add whatever titles of Magnes lie behind the participles at *Knights* 522–523: "wearing wings", "buzzing like a fly", and "dyed like a frog". The scholiast confidently gives the titles *Birds*, *Gall-Flies*, and *Frogs*, but Spyropoulos (1973) suspects these are but deductions from the text without independent evidence.

[9] See Csapo and Slater (1995, 88–101), and now Rothwell (2007). For illustrations of the better-known vases, see Sifakis (1971a, 73–93, plates I–VIII following p. 74) and Pickard-Cambridge (1962, 132–187, plates VII–IX).

ers of a local South Italian farce called *phlyakes*, but since the late 1980s, it has been recognised that these in fact represent revivals of Athenian Old Comedies transplanted to Italy.[10] Thus, it is argued, these padded dancers are the ancestors of Athenian comic performers, again a reasonable and mildly compelling hypothesis, but it is still a jump from Corinthian choral dancers of the sixth century to Athenian actors in the fifth century. Moreover, these scenes disappear after the middle of the sixth century, after which vases tend to show ordinary komasts or scenes with satyrs. These last do have an attested association with Dionysos. Csapo and Slater conclude that "it seems certain that both satyrs and padded komasts performed dances in either a private or festival context from the late 6th century. Their costumes suggest they were professionals".[11] But it is still a long step from these exuberant dancers to the organised comedy of the fifth-century Attic festivals.[12]

The extant comedies themselves provide only hints about the early history of the genre. Much attention has been given to certain songs in iambics (*Acharnians* 836–859, *Frogs* 416–439, Eupolis fr. 99.1–22), where the chorus formally pokes fun at certain real people, presumably present in the theatre—at *Frogs* 416–417, the chorus asks the spectators, "do you want us to poke fun at …?" This, it is argued, is a relic of the primitive insults that were part of Athenian festivals—for example, the "jokes from the wagons" at the Lenaia or the "bridge business" at the Eleusinian Mysteries.[13] But not all iambic passages contain personal abuse, nor is it likely that Aristophanes or other comedians of the late fifth century would slavishly cling to an old-fashioned form in the midst of their "new and sophisticated" comedies. Aristotle recognised that early comedy had an iambic element to it, but it is more likely that this stems not from ritual insults at festivals, but from the literary genre of iambic poetry, particularly the iambics of Archilochos and Hipponax, with whom Old Comedy has much in common.[14]

Similarly, the parabasis, with its distinct and repeated substructure and direct address to the spectators, has been viewed as a relic of primitive comedy, where the chorus interacted directly with the audience with small concern for dramatic illusion. But Hubbard has shown that the

[10] On this see Taplin (1993), J.R. Green (1991b).

[11] Csapo and Slater (1995, 93).

[12] For a more optimistic view, see Seeberg (1995), with a good bibliographical note at 1n2. See also Csapo and Miller (2007).

[13] See, for example, Fraenkel (1962, 201–204) and Dover (1995, 247).

[14] See Rosen (1988, 9–36) and Zanetto (2001), among others.

parabasis as used by the poets of the 420s and 410s is a lively and sophisticated dramatic device.[15] Perhaps in early comedy performers addressed the spectators directly, but the parabasis, as we see it in Aristophanes, is far from being a primitive relic. Likewise the agon, again possessing a formal and repeated structure, could be an early feature of comedy, but the Greeks did like competition and confrontation, and it is a long way from a vulgar Punch-and-Judy routine to the agon of *Clouds* or *Frogs*, where the issues and the humour are subtle and sophisticated.

From whatever its origins, comedy received official sanction in the late 490s or 480s, later than both tragedy and its offshoot, the satyr-play. Several critics have tried to relate the traditional date of 486 for the institution of comedy to public reaction against the aristocrats with tyrannical or Persian leanings and to the first use of ostracism at this time. On this view comedy began as a weapon against prominent men, especially those with a right-wing bias, but was subverted two generations later by the right wing as a weapon against the popular democracy.[16] This seems to attribute too much political motive at the start of comedy. Allowing that the evidence before 440 is very sparse, I still prefer to see the political themes of Old Comedy entering the genre in the 440s along with the literary iambic tradition—the crucial figure here is Kratinos. Comedy is very probably the product of animal choruses, padded dancers, prancing satyrs, and komasts abusing spectators and one another at festivals. By the early fifth century, it had attained a style and a language of its own and was afforded official status at the dramatic festivals held as part of the City Dionysia.

2. *Old Comedy: The Early Years*

We have only tiny bits and pieces about the very first comedians at Athens. The first recorded poet is SOUSARION (Kassel-Austin VIII 661–663). One tradition makes him a Megarian, but this may just originate in Aristotle's record that the mainland Megarians claimed to be the originators of comedy (*Poetics* 1448a30–32).[17] Another tradition (Σ Dionysius Thrax 475.20) describes him as the inventor of the iambus. The *Suda* (c. 318) names CHIONIDES (Kassel-Austin IV 72–76) as the first competi-

[15] Sifakis (1971a, 15–70), Hubbard (1991) passim.
[16] See Seeberg (1995, 6) and A. Edwards (1993, 97–104).
[17] See Pickard-Cambridge (1962, 183–187) and Breitholz (1960, 74–82).

tor of Old Comedy and provides the traditional date for the institution of comedy at the Dionysia—"they say … that he produced eight years before the Persian Wars"—while Aristotle (*Poetics* 1448a33) links him with Magnes as the early creators of Attic comedy. We have three titles and seven fragments, but fr. 4 suspiciously mentions Gnesippos, a κωμῳδούμενος of the 430s.

But we can say something more definite about MAGNES (Kassel-Austin V 626–631). The *Suda* (μ 20) describes him as young when Epicharmos was old, perhaps insinuating a master-pupil relationship. Diomedes (*Ars Grammatica* 488.23) says that he, along with Sousarion and Myllos, created a sort of comedy that was "less polished than charming". The anonymous writer on comedy (Koster III 7) records eleven victories for him, the highest total for any writer of Old Comedy. Much of our information about the lost poets and the dating of comedy depends on a series of battered inscriptions (*IG* ii^2 2318–2325), one of which records the yearly results of all competitions at the City Dionysia (*IG* ii^2 2318, often called the Fasti), six of which (*IG* ii^2 2319–2324) contain more detailed dramatic records with the poets and their plays in order of finish, and one a Victors' List (*IG* ii^2 2325) for tragic and comic victors at the City Dionysia and at the Lenaia, listed in order of their first victory.[18] The sixth entry on this list gives for the Dionysia a poet with a short name ending in -s (… Σ), who won eleven victories. This must certainly be Magnes. The Fasti (*IG* ii^2 2318.8) give him a victory in 472.[19] Aristophanes' *Knights* 518–525 (424) calls the spectators to remember a spectacular failure by Magnes, which is presumably of recent memory, and thus indicating a career that lasted into the 430s. It would seem that the victory in 472 was more likely an early victory rather than a late one.

Most of the evidence that we have about Magnes comes from this passage in Aristophanes:

> Being well aware of what happened to Magnes, when he grew old and grey, Magnes who had put up the most victory-trophies over his rivals, making every sort of sound for you, strumming the lyre, flapping his wings, playing the Lydian, buzzing like a fly, dyed like a frog, but he did not succeed, and in the end, in his old age, never when he was young, he was rejected because he failed in σκώπτειν.

[18] This evidence is well presented and analysed at Olson S.D. (2007, 379–391).

[19] S.D. Olson (2007) shows that if this is Magnes' first victory, then the institution of comedy could be as late as 477, if it is his last as early as the late 490s. Thus the traditional date (486) is well within the range allowed.

The scholiast to this passage gives actual play-titles: *Lyre-Players* (*Barbistai*), *Birds*, *Lydians*, *Gall-flies*, *Frogs*, but of these only *Lydians* is otherwise attested, and we must remain doubtful whether the scholiast had any independent evidence for these titles. The words σκώμμα and σκώπτειν can just mean "have fun" and "joke around", but they do tend to have the more restricted meaning of "poke fun at", and the sense of Aristophanes' criticism may be that Magnes used to win many victories with his naïve and primitive comedy, but when in old age he put on a comedy in the heyday of vigourous political comedy with personal humour, it failed in comparison to what audiences now expected.

The anonymous writer (Koster III) says that "none of his plays survive, but there are nine attributed to him", and two late references (Hesychios λ 1352; *Suda* λ 784) describe *Lydians* as a revised comedy. We do know that later comedians on occasion revised their comedies—*Clouds* as we have it is a partial revision—or wrote two comedies with the same title—for example, *Thesmophoriazousai* and Eupolis' *Autolykos*.[20] If Magnes did have a lengthy career, perhaps it was he who revised his comedies in tune with the changing nature of comedy in the 430s.

One other successful comedian of the early years was EKPHANTIDES (Kassel-Austin V 126–129), who appears on the Dionysia Victors' List (*IG* ii^2 2325.49) with four victories immediately before Kratinos, whose début is traditionally set in 454 and after Euphronios, whose one victory can be dated to 458. He was thus a comedian of the 450s and 440s. Some play titles have survived (*Peirai*, *Satyrs*), as well as six fragments.

3. *Kratinos and the Second Generation*

We can begin to say something more definite about the second generation of Old Comedians. Dramatists such as Telekleides, Hermippos, Kallias, Krates, Pherekrates, and especially Kratinos dominate the comic competitions for the quarter century from 450 to 425. Two important things happen to comedy during this period: (1) the institution of dramatic contests at the Lenaia festival in the late 440s[21]—these would double the number of comedies produced in a given year—and (2) the devel-

[20] On the two plays titled *Thesmophoriazousai,* see Butrica (2001b) and Olson-Austin (2004).

[21] S.D Olson (2007, 387–388) shows that the evidence from the Lenaia portion of the Victors' List (*IG* ii^2 2325.116–138) fixes the termini of these competitions at 454 and 434.

opment of political themes and personal humour—with the latter the name of KRATINOS (Kassel-Austin IV 112–337) is often associated.

Some uncertainty surrounds the beginning and end of Kratinos' career. One anonymous writer (Koster III 20) says that "he won after the 85th Olympiad" (440/439–437/436). But his name is restored with considerable probability at *IG* ii^2 2325.50, two places after Euphronios, whose sole victory is dated to 458. Thus a date in the 450s for his début seems more probable. Meineke emended the text of the anonymous writer to read "he won after the 81st Olympiad" (456/455–453/452), but the lower date may reflect his first victory at the Lenaia (fourth on *IG* ii^2 2325.121). At the lower end, we know of productions for 425-Lenaia (*Storm-Tossed*), 424-Lenaia (*Satyrs*), and 423-Dionysia (his brilliant metatheatrical *Wine-Flask*). Then we have a joke from Aristophanes' *Peace* at the Dionysia of 421 (700–703):

Hermes [speaking for Peace who has been absent since 431] Is Kratinos the great ⟨poet⟩ still alive?
Trygaios He died, when the Spartans invaded.
Hermes What happened?
Trygaios What? He passed out, just couldn't stand to see a full jar of wine smashed.

As the Spartans had not invaded since 425 and since Kratinos was alive and producing in 423, he could not literally have died at the time of a Spartan invasion. As no fragment or play by Kratinos requires a date after 423, it seems fair to conclude that this passage does indicate Kratinos' death before 421, although it is possible that the whole thing is a comic fiction, part of the ongoing public exchange between the poets.

Kratinos is the first comic poet about whom we can form some sort of coherent picture. The combination of about twenty-five titles, five hundred fragments, and considerable *testimonia* has created the image of the "grand old man" of Athenian comedy, the rugged and unpolished successor of Archilochos, a "blame poet", famous for his attacks on his targets, and very likely the creator of political comedy. The testimony is of two sorts: certain descriptions in Aristophanes and the witness of the scholarly tradition. With the first we must always be careful, since the metatheatrics of Old Comedy are notoriously unreliable—one comedian is ever ready to indulge in the great game of playing to the spectators by running down his rivals (and at the same time building up his own image)—and if Aristophanes compliments Kratinos in one passage, it is only to bring him down in the next. The best-known passage comes from the parabasis of *Knights* (526–536):

> Then [our poet] remembered Kratinos, who spurting once with much applause flowed over the Plains of Unsophistication, uprooting from their places and carrying off oaks and plane-trees and enemies headlong. At a symposium you couldn't sing anything but "Bribery, in (im)peach-wood sandals" or "Builders of artful hymns". He was in his prime then. But now you see him drooling and have no pity for him—his pegs have fallen out, his tuning lost, chords all disjointed. The old man just wanders about, like Konnas "with a withered garland and dying of thirst". Because of his previous victories he should be dining in the prytaneion, and be sitting in the theatre splendidly right beside Dionysos, and not be producing such drivel.

Remember that Kratinos was Aristophanes' rival (with *Satyrs*) at the Lenaia of 424, and this becomes a two-edged compliment: he used to be so good (once), but now he is past his prime and should be a spectator in the theatre, not producing this second-rate comedy (*ληρεῖν*).

Elsewhere Aristophanes makes further jokes about Kratinos' drunkenness (*Knights* 400, *Peace* 700–703), weaves a series of enigmatic allusions at *Acharnians* 848–854 ("his hair cut in a permanent adulterer's style"), wishes at *Acharnians* 1168–1173 that Kratinos be hit in the face by a fresh bull's turd, and equates the experience of comedy as "being initiated into the rites of bull-eating Kratinos" (*Frogs* 357). This last allusion is clearly long after Kratinos has vanished from the scene, and as often happens in comedy, a previous victim can be complimented after his death, for example, Pericles in Eupolis' *Demoi*.

This comic picture has certainly affected the later tradition. Once Aristotle had established the difference between "former" comedy as characterised by *aischrologia* (saying shameful things) and "modern" comedy by ὑπόνοια (subtlety), critics would have selected as the representatives of Old Comedy those poets whose comic style fit this description, who were political and personally abusive.[22] Kratinos, in particular, described as "emulator of Archilochos" (Platonios 2.1–2 Perusino), was seen as a "blame poet", who "would attack more bitterly and shamefully than was necessary" (*Life of Aristophanes* = Koster XXVIII 4–5). One writer (Koster III 24) regards him as the comic Aeschylus, another (Koster V 15–20) attributes to him the formal basics of Athenian comedy, punishing wrongdoers with the "public whip of comedy". It would be useful to know if either had actually read any Kratinos. Platonios II creates a spectrum between the rough and graceless directness of Kratinos and the charming elegance of Eupolis, leaving Aristophanes as a very

[22] See Csapo (2000) and Storey (2003, 1–5).

Aristotelian *medius in rebus*. He is the earliest of the canonical three, the rough genius, the grand old man of comedy, immediate predecessor of Aristophanes.

We have about twenty-four titles and five hundred fragments spanning a career of about thirty years. By comparison Aristophanes wrote forty plays in about forty or so years, Eupolis fourteen in eighteen years. Four of his comedies deserve special mention. First there is *Odysseus and Crew* (*Odyssês*), a parody of the story of Odysseus and the Cyclops in *Odyssey* 9.[23] It would be interesting to compare this treatment of the story with that in Euripides' *Cyclops*, especially as the comedy is very likely the earlier play. But what is more significant is Platonios' statement that this comedy belongs to the type of Middle Comedy, because it had "neither choral parts nor *parabases*" (1.36–38 Perusino) and contained no personal humour, only the parody of Homer (1.63–65 Perusino). The latter may well be true, since there are no personal jokes among the fifteen fragments, and it allows for an attractive dating of the comedy to the period of the "Morychides decree" (440/439–437/436), when personal jokes were prohibited by a decree.[24] But the plurals in frr. 148–151, the secure mention of "you trusty companions" (fr. 150.1), the statement at fr. 151 in paroemiacs (a choral metre) that "our homeland is Ithaca and we are sailing with god-like Odysseus", plus the implications of the title make it clear that there was a chorus in this play and that it represented the companions of Odysseus. Körte concluded that Platonios or his source had got his facts wrong, Kaibel that the play lacking choral parts was not *Odysseus and Crew*, but Aristophanes' *Aiolosikon* mentioned in the same passage, and Norwood that there was a chorus but that it had no formal songs.[25] Platonios is notoriously inaccurate in his chronology and I suspect that he has found in *Odysseus and Crew* an example of the burlesque of myth that in his view typified Middle Comedy and drew a false conclusion about its contents.

Wealth-Gods (*Ploutoi*) provides us with the only extended piece of Kratinos, fr. 171, ninety significantly damaged lines of a second-century AD papyrus, the first of which are in anapaestic dimeter and do afford some limited connected sense. The chorus explain that "you [pl.] will learn. We are Titans by race and were called 'Wealth-gods' when" (11–12). Some lines later they explain their presence, "now that the rule of

[23] See frr. 147–151, also Platonios 1.36–38, 65–67 Perusino.
[24] Σ *Acharnians* 67.
[25] Norwood (1931, 129–133), with bibliography at 130n1.

tyranny is ended and the demos rules, we have rushed here seeking our ancient brother, even if he is old and decrepit" (22–26). The identity of the "ancient brother" has been much debated: Kronos, Ploutos, the Athenian δῆμος, and (attractively) Prometheus.[26] We know that the lost *Prometheus Released* of Aeschylus had a chorus of Titans (fr. 193), and if this comic chorus has any relationship with that group, Prometheus may well be the person being sought by the chorus. Several critics have also assumed confidently that the mythological action covers a local Athenian situation and that the end of tyranny and the rule of the δῆμος refers to a current event—the brief removal from office of Perikles in 430/429 (Thucydides 2.65) and thus date the play to 430 or 429.[27] Elsewhere Perikles is depicted by Kratinos as Zeus (frr. 73, 258),[28] and for some scholars a mention of Zeus in Kratinos covers an allusion to Perikles.

But I am not so certain that we must always be looking for a contemporary political theme in this play, or more generally in Kratinos. The humour of the passage may simply be that Olympos has recently experienced the same political event as Athens in the late sixth century, tyranny giving way to democracy. The setting of the play does not have to be Athens. The chorus is explaining their identity to a plural group, and later at fr. 171.66–74 they subject the parentage and wealth of an Athenian general, Hagnon son of Nikias, to scrutiny. This suggests an address to the spectators and may be outside the actual dramatic plotline. Hagnon seems to have acquired his wealth unjustly, and the chorus in their ancient capacity as Wealth-gods may be eradicating undesirable elements from Athens. Frr. 172 and 176, as well as fr. 171, show that *Wealth-Gods* explored the theme of the Golden Age, familiar from Hesiod *Works and Days* 109–126 and one that is found often in Old Comedy, though not particularly so in the extant plays of Aristophanes. While it is possible that the comedy turned on a contrast between an earlier Golden Age presided over by the Wealth-gods and a degenerate modern Athens, there is no need to turn *Wealth-Gods* into a political satire and personal attack on Perikles.

Dionysalexandros, another example of Kratinos' fondness for the burlesque of myth, is the Old Comedy about which we know the most apart

[26] See Kassel-Austin IV 206.

[27] See Gomme (1956, 188–189) and Schwarze (1971, 40–54). Geissler (1925, x, 18) canvasses earlier dates. Other studies of *Wealth-Gods* include Carrière "Carnaval" 213–229 and Podlecki (1998, 129, 174).

[28] Also at *Acharnians* 53–54.

from the eleven surviving plays of Aristophanes. This is due not to a surfeit of fragments—we possess only thirteen fragments and about fifteen lines—but to the discovery of a nearly complete hypothesis (plot summary), published in 1904 as *P.Oxy*. 663. Kratinos took the familiar story of the Judgement of Paris on Mount Ida, substituting Dionysos for Paris for the judgement and its consequences, including both Helen and the wrath of the Greeks. Paris himself appears, and the story of Paris, Helen, and the Trojan War continues in its traditional form. The chorus is composed of satyrs, more appropriate perhaps for a satyr play, but attested for comedy.[29] Dionysos appeared in his familiar comic role as the bumbling antihero, the object of the satyrs' laughter, running for cover at the arrival of the Greeks, finally handed over to them for humiliation and punishment.

The hypothesis has raised a number of problems, often with overconfident solutions. Early in the play, after the departure of Hermes (presumably to fetch the goddesses), the chorus "talk to the spectators *about the making of sons*". At least that is the text as traditionally expanded: π(ερὶ) ὑῶν ποιή(σεως). Körte proposed emending and expanding to produce π(ερὶ) τῶν ποιή(τῶν) "about the poets", a direct address by the poet to the spectators in the manner familiar from the plays of Aristophanes.[30] Whatever the reading, we do have a direct address to the spectators by the chorus on a matter outside the dramatic context. Because in Aristophanes this usually happens in the parabasis, anywhere from five hundred to one thousand lines into the play, critics have assumed that this address came from a parabasis in Kratinos' play, but as little seems to have happened before Hermes leaves and because the natural break comes later at line 19, we should consider this to be from the parodos, the first appearance of the chorus, and rethink our understanding of the structure of the comedy.

The author of the hypothesis drops a bombshell at the end of his summary: "in this play Perikles is very convincingly made fun of by innuendo for having brought the war on the Athenians". Almost all critics regard "the war" as the Peloponnesian War (which broke out in 431) and, given Perikles' death in 429, assign a date of 430 or 429. It has become an accepted conclusion that this mythological burlesque is in

[29] See Storey (2005) on this point.

[30] Körte (1904). For another interpretation of the traditional text ("on the making of sons"), see Handley (1982). Luppe (1988) has offered an eloquent defence of Körte's reading.

fact a large-scale political allegory, that Dionysos throughout is meant to represent the figure of Perikles.[31] The "making of sons" then becomes an allusion to Perikles' legitimisation of his son by Aspasia, the gifts of the goddesses (tyranny, courage in war, and beauty or love) are viewed as appropriate to him, Helen becomes Aspasia, and so on. But there is no guarantee that the allusion to Perikles was an extended one or that Dionysos is meant to stand for Perikles throughout. It is equally possible that Paris, not Dionysos, carried the allusion to Perikles, or that only one scene, perhaps at the end, made the connection to him.

Mattingly has made a good case for regarding "the war" as the war with Samos (441–439), and I have argued that both tragedy and comedy in the early 430s both reflect concern over that campaign at Athens[32]—in particular, see Plutarch *Perikles* 24 for the complaint that Perikles got Athens involved in the dispute between Samos and Miletos to gratify his Milesian mistress, Aspasia. The Samian War could thus be seen as a "war over a woman" and fits a Trojan context far better than does the Peloponnesian War. The phrase "by innuendo" might allow us to date *Dionysalexandros* during the period of the prohibition on personal attack in comedy (440/439–437/436) and on a dating of ca. 437 allows us to see Kratinos producing two mythological burlesques on the epic story of Troy, *Odysseus and Crew* and *Dionysalexandros*.

Finally, there is *Wine-Flask* (*Pytine*), the metatheatrical comedy that defeated *Clouds* at the Dionysia of 423 and aroused Aristophanes' public resentment. Its starting point was very likely Aristophanes' description of him at *Knights* 526–536 (quoted above) as a drunken has-been whose lyre has lost its pegs and who now produces nonsense. The evidence from an Aristophanic scholion (to *Knights* 400), from a reference in Plutarch (*Moralia* 634d), and from some very revealing fragments (especially 193–195, 198–203, 208–209) shows that Kratinos put himself into his own comedy as the chief character, who has abandoned his wife (Comedy) for a mistress (Μέθη, "Drunkenness"). A chorus of friends tries to recall the poet to his senses and to his true love, but from there the course of the comedy is unclear. Fr. 199 reveals someone contemplating how to "stop him from drink", and fr. 203 contains the famous defence, "one

[31] Especially by Schwarze (1971, 6–24) and Revermann (1997). A more cautious approach is that of Norwood (1931, 118–124). Other studies of note include Podlecki (1998, 169–176), McGlew (2002, 46–56), S.D. Olson (2007, 71–73, 87–92), and Storey (2006b).

[32] Mattingly (1977), Storey (2006a).

cannot create anything great by drinking water". It is entirely possible that Kratinos' friends did not succeed and that the poet made the case that drink, of which Aristophanes makes so much, was essential to his craft, the creation of comedy.[33]

This was clearly a masterpiece of intertextuality and a brilliant reply by Kratinos to the insinuations of his young rival. Pieters argued that Eupolis and Aristophanes were characters in the drama, and frr. 208–209 seem to show a scene in which a comedy is being planned and sketched out.[34] What is bold is the merging of author and plotline, and the willingness of Kratinos to cast himself in an unflattering light—something that Aristophanes could do only with difficulty and not without blaming someone else. It was a brilliant stroke by the great comedian and earned its author a well-deserved prize at the Dionysia of 423, a particularly satisfying one since Aristophanes' play finished third.

It was very likely Kratinos who made Old Comedy into a substantial dramatic form. He is associated with Archilochos, the early practitioner of iambic poetry, "inasmuch as he emulates Archilochos, he is bitter in his attacks" (Platonios 2.1–2 Perusino). His jokes against prominent leaders—the extant fragments mention Kimon, Perikles, Lampon, Hagnon, Lykourgos, Androkles, Kleon, and Hyperbolos—added a topical aspect to comedy. But does this topical element make his comedy into the same sort of political satire that we see in the comedy of the next generation, certainly that of Eupolis and Aristophanes? Was every mention of Zeus a veiled (or not-so-veiled) allusion to Perikles? Were his mythological burlesques always intended to hide an Athenian situation? Too many complicated political allegories have been built on one or two fragments and an overactive critical imagination. *Dionysalexandros* may, as the hypothesis claims, have had an allusion to Perikles and the war (which war?), but there is no hint of a sustained allegory or that the character of Dionysos was an easily recognised Perikles.[35] Similarly *Nemesis*, a burlesque of the birth of Helen from an egg incubated by Leda, may have a joke at Perikles' head at fr. 118—"come, o Zeus, god of hosts … and the head"—but to assume that the whole play was a political and personal

[33] Recent studies of *Wine-Flask* are Luppe (2000), Rosen (2000), Ruffell (2002), Biles (2002), and S.D. Olson (2007, 69–70, 80–87).

[34] Pieters (1946, 150–154).

[35] Revermann (1997, 199) regards the central character as a "Dionysperiklealexandros".

satire, in which Leda represents Aspasia and the birth of Helen becomes a "skit on the family affairs of Pericles", seems too large a step.[36]

Kratinos favoured mythological themes for his comedy. I have already mentioned *Dionysalexandros* (the Judgement of Paris), *Odysseus and Crew* (Odysseus and the Cyclops), *Wealth-Gods* (the Titans released), and *Nemesis* (the birth of Helen). To these we can add *Bousiris* (Herakles and a villainous king in Africa), *Runaways* (fr. 53 features Theseus speaking about his encounter with Kerkyon, fr. 61 an address to "o king, son of Pandion"), *Eumenides*, *Men of Seriphos* (fr. 222–223 are addressed to Perseus), and *Cheirons*. This last comedy contained the ghost of Solon as a speaking character (fr. 246) and two lyric fragments (258–259) likening Perikles and Aspasia to Zeus and Hera in unflattering terms. Thus there may have been some contemporary jokes and allusions in a burlesque of myth, but that they were political comedies cannot be maintained with confidence.

Old Comedy did possess a strong choral element, but Kratinos was remembered for his use of the chorus. The best examples are fr. 171, the appearance of the Wealth-gods and their subsequent attack on Hagnon, and fr. 151, where the chorus of Odysseus' comrades explain their identity, and we do possess other fragments of songs, often with a personal target (frr. 62, 70, 258–259). The fifth century will witness the lessening of the chorus' role in tragedy, and in comedy the chorus becomes relegated to sing entr'actes between scenes with the actors. In Kratinos we seem to have an involved and vital chorus, witness such titles as *Wealth-Gods*, *Cheirons*, *Thracian Women*, *Runaways*, and *Men of Seriphos*. On at least one occasion, the chorus of satyrs in *Dionysalexandros* turns and speaks to the spectators for the poet in the metatheatrical and intertextual manner that we have come to appreciate in Aristophanes.

Kratinos and the other poets of his generation dominate the third quarter of the fifth century, and after Hermippos' victory (435 at the latest), no new poet won at the Dionysia until Aristophanes won in the mid-420s, very likely with *Babylonians* in 426.[37] I shall turn to Aristophanes and the next generation in a moment, but there are other comic poets of this period, who do not vanish with the advent of Aristophanes and Eupolis. Hermippos, Pherekrates, and probably Kallias continued to write comedies into the 410s. If comedy was reduced from five pro-

[36] Norwood (1931, 124–125); see also Pieters (1946, 117–121) and Schwarze (1971, 24–40).

[37] On this victory see MacDowell (1995, 30n6) and now S.D. Olson (2007, 385).

ductions per festival to three during the war,[38] then these older comic poets may have found it harder to get a chorus, especially in view of the early and intense success of Eupolis and Aristophanes. That they can be glimpsed again in the 410s suggests that the reduction was reversed after the Peace of Nikias in 421, at least from 420 to 416.

KALLIAS (Kassel-Austin IV 38–53) won his first victory at the Dionysia of 446 (*IG* ii^2 2318.76–78), and a Roman inscription records the results of several of his comedies of the 430s (*IG Urb. Rom*. 216.1–6). I have argued (Storey 1988) that his *Men-in-Chains* (*Pedetai*) belongs in the mid-410s, thus suggesting a career from the mid-440s to the mid-410s. On the Victors' List for the Dionysia, he appears with two victories (*IG* ii^2 2325.53), three places after Kratinos, whose début should be placed in the mid-450s. His titles *Atalantas*, *Cyclopes*, and *Satyrs* suggest that they were burlesques of myth, favoured by Kratinos and other poets of this period, while five of the ten fragments of *Men-in-Chains* contain personal insults, implying perhaps a more contemporary and political theme. Perhaps the most intriguing possible remnant of Kallias is the so-called grammatical tragedy (Athenaios 276a, 448b, 453c), in which the letters of the alphabet spoke the prologue and taught vowels and syllables to a group of women. The dating of this work "a little earlier than Strattis", a comic rather than tragic poet, and the light tone suggest comedy rather than tragedy, but most would reject our Kallias as the author since the alphabet in question is the Ionic, with seven vowels, introduced officially at Athens in the very late fifth century. This would date the play to the turn of the century—rather late, but not impossible, for a poet whose career began around 450.[39]

HERMIPPOS was considered by Norwood to be "an unimportant playwright", but Gilula has raised him to a more significant status.[40] A victory at the Dionysia of 435 is attested by *IG* ii^2 2318. The Victors' List for the Dionysia (*IG* ii^2 2325.57) gives the first part of his name without the number of victories, after Pherekrates and before Aristophanes; his entry on the Lenaia Victors' List (*IG* ii^2 2325.123) gives four victories. The *Suda* (ε 3044) records a total of forty comedies, but as we have only ten secure titles, I cannot believe that we have lost any hint of or allusion to three-quarters of the work of an important comic poet. Allowing that a

[38] See Storey (2002) on this debated matter.

[39] On this play see Rosen (1999).

[40] Norwood (1931, 22), Gilula (2000). That he was also a writer of iambic poems (West II [1992b, 69–73]) may have coloured our view of his comedy.

successful comedian produced a comedy a year, a total of forty comedies would imply a career for Hermippos to the turn of the century, but if we accept a lower number (ten or twelve), then I would feel comfortable with a career principally in the 430s and 420s, with one comedy (*Bread-Wives*) belonging to the early 410s.

Several of the titles and fragments show that Hermippos favoured the mythological burlesque that was also a feature of Kratinos' comedy: *Agamemnon*, *Birth of Athena*, *Europe*, *Kerkopes*, and whatever comedy contained fr. 77, spoken by Dionysos. *Fates* (*Moirai*) could also be a burlesque of myth, but frr. 47–48 reveals a vigourous choral song attacking Perikles and mentioning Kleon. The opening lines (47.1–3)—"King of the satyrs, why are you unwilling to take up the spear, but just make terrible speeches about the war?"—we know to have been aimed at Perikles and should reflect the discontent with his conduct of the war in 430 (Thucydides 2.20–22, 59–65) and suggest a date at that time. The mention of Sitalkes in fr. 63 of *Basket-Bearers* (*Phormophoroi*) argues for a date in the first half of the 420s, while *Bread-Wives* (*Artopolides*) is referred to for its attack on Hyperbolos in the incomplete revision of *Clouds* (line 557), to be dated 419 or 418. Previously Aristophanes has mentioned Eupolis' comic attack on Hyperbolos in *Marikas* (Lenaia of 421); thus *Bread-Wives* belongs to 420 or 419. Σ *Clouds* 557 makes the important observation that "Hermippos did not write a play against Hyperbolos; he seems to be indicating some things said against him in *Bread-wives*". Hermippos thus could make personal jokes at leading politicians, but his plays may not be political comedies as such.

More perplexing is the statement of Plutarch (*Perikles* 32.1) that "Aspasia was the defendant in a prosecution for impiety, launched by Hermippos the comic poet, in which he alleged that she entertained free women in a certain place for Perikles". Several critics accept the historicity of this trial, but the whole thing sounds suspiciously like a caricature in comedy that has been turned into "fact" by later scholars hungry for biographical details.[41] Since frr. 47–48 from *Fates* contain a choral song aimed at Perikles, this seems an appropriate comedy for a comic attack on Aspasia. Some have suggested that the Zeus of fr. 42 of *Fates* is Perikles and that fr. 46 hides a reference to Perikles' lack of concern for the war, but this is to reach too far.

[41] For bibliography see Kassel-Austin V 561 and Gilula (2000, 76).

TELEKLEIDES (Kassel-Austin VII 667–692) seems to have been a lesser light of the period and to have competed principally in the 430s, although fr. 44 mentions Nikias and may have to do with his resignation of the generalship in 425. The most important fragment is the fifteen-line description from his *Amphiktyons* (fr. 1) of the ideal way of life in the past: "I shall describe then from the beginning the way of life that I used to provide for mortals … men were fat then and very much like giants". The speaker remains a mystery, although Kronos seems a reasonable guess. The play title (*Hesiods*) suggests a comedy with a literary theme; in fr. 15 a female speaker (a Muse or Tragedy or Poetry?) makes a disparaging remark about Philokles, the nephew of Aeschylus. Fr. 41 links Sokrates with the construction of plays by Euripides.

Norwood spoke too confidently of "the school of Krates", including here this poet as well as Pherekrates, Phrynichos, and, most improbably, Platon.[42] In his view these poets were producing a different sort of comedy from the abusive topical plays of Eupolis and Aristophanes. KRATES occurs on the Victors' List for the Dionysia (*IG* ii^2 2325.52) with three victories between Kratinos (début in the mid-450s) and Kallias (victory in 446), in the list of poets in the anonymous (Koster III 26–28) between Kratinos and Pherekrates, and at *Knights* 537–540 after Magnes and Kratinos. His career thus belongs to the 440s and 430s—the reference at *Knights* 537 to "the displeasure and insults of yours that he endured" suggests a recent event that the spectators are expected to remember. The *Suda* (κ 2339) mentions seven plays and gives six titles; one anonymous writer (Koster III 28) gives seven plays, another (Koster VIII 4) eight.

We know of Krates' comedy from three ancient sources: (1) the well-known passage from Aristotle's *Poetics* (1449b5), "of the Athenians Krates was the first to abandon the iambic form and to write whole plots and stories"; (2) the statements of the anonymous writer (Koster III 26–28), that "Krates was a very funny and humorous poet, he succeeded Kratinos and was the first to bring drunken people on stage in comedy" and that "Pherekrates was an actor for and emulator of Kratinos and like him refrained from abusive language" (Koster III 29–30); and (3) the description from the parabasis of *Knights*: "and the anger and abuse of yours that Krates endured, who used to send you away with a good meal at small expense, kneading very clever idea-loaves from his very refined

[42] Norwood (1931, 145–177). The definitive study of Krates is Bonanno (1972).

mouth. At times he did all right, some times falling short, sometimes not". These have combined to produce the picture of a comedian of a very different sort from Aristophanes, one who in Aristotle's eyes was the ancestor of the comedy of his day. The meagre fragments bear out this conclusion. No title suggests an obvious political theme, nor are there any instances of personal humour in the fragments. The only substantial fragments (frr. 16–17) come from his *Beasts* (*Theria*), where two speakers debate the nature of the Golden Age, in passages that do not seem all that different from other such descriptions in Old Comedy. We may reasonably suppose that the comedy that aroused the "anger and abuse" was a late play in Krates' career, perhaps paling before the newer and more political sort pioneered by Kratinos.

PHEREKRATES (Kassel-Austin VII 102–220) is a more substantial figure, who seems to have enjoyed a career over several decades. In Tzetzes (*Prologue to Hesiod* 67) he replaces Kratinos as one of the canonical Three of Old Comedy. The anonymous (Koster III 29–31) links him with Krates, both as his mentor and in his avoidance of personal humour, and goes on to say that "he succeeded by introducing new material and inventing plots". As he precedes Hermippos (latest date for first victory is 435) on the Victors' List at the Dionysia (*IG* ii^2 2325.56), his début at that festival must be dated in the 430s, if not the late 440s. On the Lenaia list (*IG*^{2} 2325.122), he comes fifth, immediately after Kratinos. His *Wild Men* (*Agrioi*) is securely dated to the Lenaia of 420 (Plato *Protagoras* 327d), while his *Chimney* or *Night-Long Festival* may belong to the later 410s, if the allusion to the house of Poulytion (fr. 64) has anything to do with the parody of the Mysteries conducted in that house in or before 415 (Andokides 1.12). If *Cheiron* is in fact by Pherekrates, the allusion to Timotheos at fr. 155.19–28 places that play rather late in the fifth century.

The fragments do bear the assessment of the ancient sources. Among the nearly three hundred fragments, there are not many that mention persons outside the play (frr. 6, 11, 15, 64, 143, 148, 149, 155, 164), and apart from a shot at the dubious gender of Alkibiades (fr. 164), none is aimed at a political figure. In fact, most of the κωμῳδούμενοι in Pherekrates are poets or musicians. There is no hint in any of the titles of a political comedy, nothing like a demagogue comedy. His *Korianno* seems to have been a domestic comedy with a woman (a hetaira?) in the principal role—frr. 73–76 reveal a drinking scene with several women, which would not be out of place in the later New Comedy of manners, while frr. 77–78 mention a love affair and an old man. Other plays about

women would include *Chimney* or *Pannychis* (if the latter title is the name of a hetaira),[43] *Thalassa*, *Petale*, and *Old Women*.

There was some dispute in antiquity about the authorship of *Miners* or *Persians* (see Athenaios 78d, 502a, 685a, and Eratosthenes fr. 46), but both seem to have turned on the familiar theme of the Golden Age or Utopia. Fr. 113 (*Miners*) contains a thirty-three-line dialogue between two speakers in which a female figure outlines the good life that awaits one in the underworld, including rich red wine served by alluring korai, while fr. 114 in choral metre describes meadows and flowers that, if also in the underworld, have much in common with the home of the dead initiates in *Frogs* (323–459). In fr. 137 (*Persians*) in anapaestic tetrameters, a speaker explains that "we will have no need of farmers or yoke-makers or sickle-makers or bronze-workers or seed or fences, for rivers of dark stew with plump dumplings will flow on their own (αὐτόματοι) through the cross-roads". The theme of "on their own" is a common one in the comic Utopias.

Pollux 9.83 tells us that a κραπάταλος was a term invented by Pherekrates in a play of the title *Krapataloi* for a monetary unit in the underworld. This is confirmed by fr. 86: "in Hades you will receive κραπάταλος and ψόθια", the latter being subunits of the first. A plural title should denote the chorus, and a chorus of coins is possible in Old Comedy, but one wonders if the title was somehow a derisive term for people—like our "small fry" or, to keep the metaphor of coinage, "small change"—and that this was applied to the chorus, either by themselves or by another. Fr. 87 is spoken by an old man in a difficult situation; he could be the familiar "hero" of Old Comedy. Fr. 100 ("I who built up and handed on to them a great art") we know to have been spoken by Aeschylus (Σ *Peace* 749), and fr. 96 ("how strange it is to be mother and wife") has been put in the mouth of Jokaste. Fr. 85 gives directions on how to get to the underworld in terms that remind one of *Frogs* 117–164. This play seems to be a comedy set in Hades with literary themes.

Wild Men, dated to the Lenaia of 420, appears to have been part of a theme of the 410s, the escape to the wilds—we may compare *Birds* and Phrynichos' *Hermit*, both in 414.[44] Plato (*Protagoras* 327cd) tells us that the chorus were μισάνθρωποι, "who possessed neither education nor law-courts nor laws nor any necessity to practice virtue". If *Birds* is any

[43] *Pannychis* can mean a "night-long festival", but could also be a woman's name (Pannychos is an attested man's name), and an appropriate one for a hetaira.

[44] On this theme see Ceccarelli (2000).

guide, the comedy will have featured one or two men from civilisation, probably Athens, who go to the wilds seeking a better way of life (see fr. 10) and who discover that the ἄγριοι are hardly congenial neighbours (see fr. 14). Certain titles and fragments suggest burlesques of myth: *Herakles the Man*, *Deserters* (fr. 28 has the gods complaining about men), *Ant-Men* (fr. 125 addresses Deukalion, survivor of the Flood), and perhaps *Tyranny* (fr. 150 concerns the gods and sacrifices). Both the comedies of Utopia and the mythological burlesques could belong to the 430s, when Pherekrates was at the height of his career and these sorts of comedy were in vogue.

The longest and most controversial fragment is fr. 155 (*Cheiron*), quoted by Pseudo-Plutarch 1141c who records that "Pherekrates the comic poet brought Music on stage as a woman, her whole body mistreated, and had Justice ask the cause of her condition". In the twenty-eight lines that follow, Music denounces what four dithyrambic poets (Melanippides, Kinesias, Phrynis, and Timotheos) have done to her, employing a clever series of double entendres that mix terms of music with suggestions of physical and sexual assault. This fragment has been the subject of much recent discussion, which tends to focus on the issue of gender—whether Music is to be viewed as a virtuous wife or as a hetaira and how this quasi-pornographic view of women fits into the patriarchy of fifth-century Athens.[45] It is a very clever piece of extended writing and gives us a glimpse of a poet whom we are sorry to have lost, one who seems to have written a different sort of comedy and deserves a higher place of recognition.

4. *Comedy: The Next Generation*

In the 420s four new comic poets arrive on the scene with a vengeance. In the five years from 429 to 424, the Athenians witnessed the débuts of Phrynichos and Eupolis (429), Aristophanes (427), and Platon (424), the poets who would become synonymous with Old Comedy, with the intensely political and personal style for which it would become famous. It may be too simplistic to see the comedy of 440s and 430s as depending on the mythological burlesque and the theme of the Golden Age—with any political theme muted and indirect or limited to songs by the chorus—but the comedy of the 420s is certainly more topical and

[45] See the studies of Dobrov and Urios-Aparisi (1995) and Henderson (2000).

political, especially the demagogue comedy that Aristophanes pioneered with *Knights* in 424. In view of the tensions of the War, the increasing factionalism of Athenian politics, and the rise of the "new politicians", the Sophists, Euripides, and the "New Music", it could be a natural development that comedy might acquire such an edge.

PHRYNICHOS (Kassel-Austin VII 393–430) is the least prominent of the four. One anonymous writer (Koster III 32) gives his début as 429; ten titles are attested by another source (Koster VIII 7), and eleven by the *Suda* (φ 763). We have nearly a hundred fragments. He won a victory at the Lenaia in 428 or 427 (*IG* ii^2 2325.124); other fixed dates are the Lenaia of 414 (with *Hermit*) and the Lenaia of 405 (*Muses*). *Hermit* was one of the "escape" comedies of the 410s, and fr. 19 is spoken by its title character: "My name is 'Monotropos' and I live the life of Timon". Fr. 20 mentions "an old man, without children, without a wife". Three fragments contain jokes at targets who will appear at Aristophanes' *Birds*, produced two months later: fr. 22 at Meton, who may also have appeared as a character in Phrynichos' play; fr. 23, a jest at Nikias in language quite close to that at *Birds* 362–363; and fr. 27, the often cited curse of Syrakosios (cf. *Birds* 1297) for his alleged decree against personal humour.[46] His *Muses* was clearly a comedy with the theme of poetry, produced interestingly at the same festival as Frogs; his literary interest is confirmed by another lost comedy, *Tragedians* (or *Tragic Performers*), of which fr. 58 speaks of "the arrangement of lines". A final intriguing problem is the identity of the comedy that "some time ago" parodied the story of Andromeda and that Eupolis plagiarised for his *Marikas* (421): "First of all that lousy Eupolis dragged his lousy Marikas on stage, turning our Knights inside out, tacking on a drunken old woman for the sake of a *kordax*, the one that Phrynichos portrayed some time ago, the one that the sea-monster was devouring" (*Clouds* 553–556).

EUPOLIS (Kassel-Austin V 294–539) was the third of the canonical Three of comedy and has often been seen as both friend and rival to Aristophanes. His career was short and successful. His début is dated in 429 and his death "in a sea-battle in the Hellespont" (*Suda* ε 3657), most likely the battle at Kynos Sema in 411.[47] Ancient sources attribute fourteen or seventeen plays to him; we have fifteen secure titles, including

[46] For recent discussion and bibliography of this disputed topic, see Sommerstein (2001, 297–298).

[47] *IG* I^3 1190.52 records a Eupolis on a casualty list of this period. The most recent full study of Eupolis is Storey (2003), and for bibliography Storey (2006c).

two versions of his *Autolykos*. He won seven victories (*Suda* ε 3657), four at the Lenaia (*IG* ii^2 2325.126).

Papyri over the last hundred years have been kind in presenting us with considerable remains and information about Eupolis. Before these discoveries the longest bits of Eupolis were fr. 172 (*Spongers*), a sixteen-line epirrhema in which the chorus of spongers describe their way of life; fr. 102, seven often cited lines about Perikles from *Demes*; and fr. 193, eight lines from *Marikas*, a lively exchange involving actors and choruses. In 1911 the Cairo Papyrus gave us three leaves (120 lines) of what would be recognised as Eupolis' *Demes* (fr. 99). The Oxyrhynchos Papyrus has yielded portions of commentaries to *Marikas* (fr. 192), *Prospaltians* (fr. 259), and *Officers* (fr. 267), while fr. 260, published in 1935, provides about thirty lines from a scene in Eupolis' earliest comedy, *Prospaltians*, one that some have interpreted (in my view, mistakenly) as an attack on Perikles.

Four comedies deserve to be mentioned in some detail. First, *Marikas* (Lenaia of 421) is a demagogue comedy (see below for details), which did for Hyperbolos what *Knights* had done for (to?) Kleon. After the death of Kleon in late 422, Hyperbolos had become a leading popular politician (see *Peace* 679–692) and appears in Eupolis' comedy under the name "Marikas", which carried overtones of foreign birth, servile status, youth, roguery, and a hint of the passive homosexual.[48] Aristophanes would claim indignantly (perhaps too much so) in *Clouds* (551–558) that Eupolis had plundered his *Knights* to create his *Marikas*, and the fragments of *Marikas* do show an extensive use of material in *Knights*, even to the statement in fr. 201, probably from the prologue, "we are being knights this time". But Eupolis did not just serve up a *Knights* reheated. We can detect three major changes in Eupolis' comedy: (1) the antagonist of Hyperbolos-Marikas is not an even worse type, but someone from the καλοικἀγαθοί (the fine and good); (2) the use of a divided chorus, of rich and poor men, each supporting one side in the struggle (frr. 192.97–98, 117–118, 193); and (3) a scene with Hyperbolos' mother performing a vulgar dance (*kordax*), a scene that Aristophanes alleges Eupolis stole from Phrynichos.[49]

In the same year (Dionysia of 421), Eupolis won with *Spongers* (*Kolakes*), in which he made fun of the extravagant lifestyle of Kallias, the richest man in Athens, whose father Hipponikos had just died, leaving Kallias

[48] On the name Marikas, see Cassio (1985) and J.D. Morgan (1986).
[49] On *Marikas* see Storey (2003, 197–214) and Sommerstein (2000).

his fortune. Kallias had a reputation for lavish entertaining, especially of Sophists and thinkers—Plato's *Protagoras* is set at his house, and the opening scene gives a similarly comic look at his *ménage* of tame philosophers. The fragments reveal that Kallias is the polar opposite of his tight-fisted father (fr. 156), that Protagoras had a speaking role in the comedy as the αλαζών or pretentious expert (frr. 157–158), and that a feast of massive proportions is being planned (frr. 160, 165). There is no firm proof, but it is an attractive supposition that Kallias, rather reminiscent of a young aristocrat in P.G. Wodehouse, is despoiled of his fortune and comes to grief at the end. The chorus was composed not of the philosophers themselves, but of professional spongers, who have become expert in cadging a free meal and living off the rich. In an epirrhema from a parabasis, fr. 172 describes their method of operation: "We shall tell you what sort of life we spongers have; so hear now how we are clever men in every way".[50]

Baptai had quite the reputation in the ancient world, but the first problem we face is what the title means. The word occurs only here in Greek literature, and the most frequent interpretation is that it means "dippers"—that the chorus were "immersed" or "baptised" into the rites of Kotyto (see below)—but the more usual meaning of *baptein* in the fifth century is "to dye"; hence "Dyers" is my preferred rendering. The play appears to have featured the arrival of a wild goddess from the north, Kotyto, and her reception by a chorus of devotees, the chorus of *Baptai*, whom Σ Juvenal 2.92 describes as "men dressed as women dancing in honour of Kotyto". On the translation as "Dyers", these men will have dyed either their hair or bodies or more likely their robes or perhaps those for the new goddess.

The comedy was infamous in the ancient world for its connection with the notorious Athenian leader Alkibiades. Several ancient sources give in various forms the story that Eupolis had attacked Alkibiades in his *Baptai* and that the latter had not only replied with a witty couplet—"You may dye me in the theatre, but I will make you die by immersing you in the sea"—but also wreaked a personal vengeance during the expedition to Sicily, either drowning him or just dunking him in the sea.[51] This incident, it is alleged, was also responsible for bringing the freedom of Old Comedy to an end. Ancient sources were well aware that Eupolis

[50] Recent studies of *Spongers* include Tylawsky (2002, 43–57) and Storey (2003, 179–197).

[51] These are collected at Storey (2003, 379–381).

could not have died en route to Sicily, since they could date plays of his produced after 415. It is unclear whether Alkibiades was the object of the entire comedy or just made fun of in a memorable visual scene. Most critics assume the former, but we should be careful not to favour too much.[52]

Finally, there is *Demes* (Demoi), which was perhaps the best-known Greek comedy in antiquity, apart from the plays of Aristophanes. The Cairo Papyrus (fr. 99) shows that this comedy was still being copied in the fourth or fifth century AD, while fr. 102 is cited or alluded to in nearly thirty ancient and mediaeval sources. Various ancient sources make the plot clear: four dead Athenian leaders (Solon, Aristeides, Miltiades, and Perikles) return from the underworld to Athens, where they interacted with denizens of the modern city and, in good Old Comic style, put things right with their city. Fr. 99.78–120 shows Aristeides "the Just" encountering and dealing with a "sycophant" (informer), one of the most frequent villains of Old Comedy. The comedy turned on the familiar antithesis of old-good/modern-inferior (see frr. 102–104, 106, 111, 129–130), and fr. 131 shows that the Four were honoured by the chorus at the end.

Critics have made a number of assumptions about this play, most of which can be challenged.[53] First, we know that the main character in the comedy was named Pyronides (see frr. 99.56, 68; 100; 105) and, for most of the last century, that he was meant to represent Myronides, the Athenian general of the 450s and 440s. But Plepelits showed definitively that Pyronides is a *nom parlant*, "the fiery one" or "cleanser by fire",[54] and that he was the typical hero of Old Comedy, whose great idea comes to fulfilment on the comic stage. If we take *Peace* or *Birds* as a parallel, Pyronides will have been distressed with the situation at Athens and have taken action to right the situation—namely, raising the Four Dead Leaders. A South Italian vase by Assteas (ca. 350) shows a comic scene in which an old man, labelled "Pyronides", takes a musician, labelled "Phrynis", by the hand. Phrynis is a known target elsewhere in Old Comedy and would seem in this comedy to have been one of the unwelcome "intruders" who are manhandled by the protagonist.

Second, it is commonly assumed that the play fell into two parts, an initial scene in the underworld where the agon would be either whether

[52] On *Baptai* see Furley (1996, 131–133), Sommerstein (1996), Lozanova (1996), and Storey (2003 94–111).

[53] Recent studies of *Demes* include Storey (2003, 111–174) and Telò (2007).

[54] Plepelits (1970, 116–132).

to send a delegation from the dead or whom to send, followed by the return to Athens where the Four take charge. Here the influence of *Frogs* is strongly felt in that critics assume that, although *Demes* is the earlier comedy, it will have resembled *Frogs*. Thus *Demes* will have had an agon among the dead and perhaps even the presence of Plouton. But there is no evidence in the fragments for any scene in the underworld, and since what evidence we have stresses the raising of the dead, I would prefer a necromancy in the opening scenes of the play. I suggest also a tripartite structure for the comedy: an opening scene with the raising of the Four,[55] the return to Athens plus the agon (possibly whether to turn the state over to the dead leaders), and a series of episodes in which leader put things right through an encounter with an appropriate antagonist—Aristeides with a "sycophant", Miltiades with a general, Perikles with a politician (Alkibiades?), and Solon with a lawgiver or a sophist (Sokrates?).

Then there is the identity of the chorus. A plural title in Old Comedy should suggest the chorus—the principal exception is *Frogs*. Were they an individuated chorus in which individual demes were represented—here we may compare Eupolis' *Cities*, where the chorus was made up of twenty-four different cities of the ἀρχή (frr. 245–247)? Were they just the political demes with none singled out individually? Or should we take δῆμοι in its principal meaning of "country towns" and envision a chorus of essentially countryfolk? At fr. 99.11–15 the chorus complain about "those people in the Long Walls, for they eat better than we do". The inference is that the chorus is less well off than even these temporary residents of the city.

Finally there is the question of the date. Traditional consensus has long favoured 412 for a number of reasons, principally the mention of "those in the Long Walls" (fr. 99.12–14), who, it is argued, only returned from the country after the Spartan occupation of Dekeleia in 413, and the notion that a play about the return of dead leaders demands a serious contemporary situation—and what more serious situation than the disaster in Sicily in 413? But I would argue for a date in 417, since Andokides 1.45 shows that there was a substantial population in the Long Walls in 415, and because a date in 417 allows the battle at Mantineia (418), mentioned at fr. 99.30–32, to be a recent event.

Earlier critics have taken seriously some of the comments made by both Eupolis and Aristophanes and created a romantic picture of two

[55] Here I would place fr. 99, which I see as not as coming from a parabasis but as part of the parodos, the initial appearance of the chorus in the comedy.

young comic poets taking on the dramatic and political establishment of the day.[56] Then, on this view, they fell out over Eupolis' alleged plundering of *Knights* in his *Marikas* and exchanged a series of angry comments in the early 410s (Aristophanes *Clouds* 551–558, fr. 58; Eupolis frr. 62, 89). This last is Eupolis' well-known response to Aristophanes: "as for those *Knights*, I collaborated with the bald poet, I made him a gift of them". He cannot be responding to *Clouds* 551–558, since that revision was never completed or performed, but to some other instance when Aristophanes expressed the same complaint. I have suggested (Storey 1993b) that this occasion was Aristophanes' *Anagyros* (see fr. 58). We need always to be careful of taking seriously what a comic poet says about himself, his rivals, or the spectators. A great game is being played in which the poet will create for himself a public persona—in Aristophanes' case, the innovative and brilliant, and unappreciated, comic poet.

Eupolis' comedy does seem to have resembled that of Aristophanes. Topical and political themes are prevalent, although only three or four were overtly political (*Demes*, *Marikas*, *Cities*, and perhaps *Golden Race*). Eupolis created many of his comedies out of prominent personalities of his time. Here we may cite *Spongers*, about Kallias and his ménage; *Autolykos*, the title character being the boy-athlete known from Xenophon's *Symposium*; *Dyers*, to some degree about Alkibiades; *Demes*, with Perikles whose memory would still be fresh; and *Officers*, in which Dionysos goes to the general Phormion "to learn the rules of war" (Σ *Peace* 347). What we fail to get is large-scale literary parody, like the repeated caricature of Euripides by Aristophanes. For all his reputation and considerable success, the fragments do not show a comedian of the same depth and verbal brilliance of Aristophanes. We can agree with Platonios (2.8–9 Perusino) that Eupolis "comes up with brilliant ides for his plots", but also with Silk that there is "nothing to suggest that Aristophanes learnt anything about writing poetry from him".[57]

With PLATON (Kassel-Austin VII 431–548) we meet a comic poet who, like Aristophanes, had a career lasting well into the fourth century. More than one ancient source makes him the proponent of Middle Comedy, if that term can be used in any meaningful way. The *Suda*

[56] Two quotations will suffice here: "close allies in a kind of literary for the purpose of driving from the stage the chief representatives of the old school" (Starkie 1897, 115) and "ils furent amis, rapprochés par leur commune lutte contre l'Homme d'État Cléon" (Rivier 1975, 198).

[57] Silk (2000b).

(π 1708) records twenty-eight plays and lists thirty titles, to which we must add *Theatre-Police* (*Rhabdouchoi*), unknown before the publication of *P.Oxy*. 2737. His début is given by an ancient source as the eightieth Olympiad (428/427–425/424). As the figures for the other major poets suggest that a comedian produced on the average one play per year, with a début in the mid-420s, Platon would have been writing comedy well into the 390s. Secure dates are the Lenaia of 405 (*Kleophon*) and 391 (*Phaon*). We may reasonably date *Feasts* (*Heortai*) on the basis of frr. 29–30, *Victories* (*Nikai*) to the early 410s (see fr. 86), *Peisandros* also to the 410s,[58] *In Great Pain* (*Perialges*) to the early 410s on the basis of frr. 114–116; *Ambassadors* (*Presbeis*) to the 390s (see fr. 127), *Sophists* (*Sophistai*) after 411 (see fr. 150), and *Hyperbolos* to 419–417. The Victors' List for the Dionysia (*IG* ii^2 2325.63) lists him after Kantharos (whose only victory belongs in 422), Phrynichos, and Ameipsias, suggesting a first victory in the 410s. *P.Oxy*. 2737 adds the interesting observation by Eratosthenes that "as long as he gave his comedies to others ⟨to produce⟩, he did well, but when he produced *Theatre-Police*, his first play in his own name, he finished fourth and was relegated to the Lenaia". We may doubt whether there was an actual rule relegating fourth- or fifth-place finishers at the Dionysia to the Lenaia of the next year, but the passage does raise some questions about the common assumption that comedies were reduced from five to three during the Peloponnesian War; this can be explained by Mastromarco's thesis that comedy returned to five after the truce of 421 and that Plato's fourth-place finish with *Theatre-Police* belongs to the early 410s.[59]

The thirty or so comedies reveal a variety of subjects and treatments. There are three instances of the demagogue comedy, first used against Kleon in *Knights*, *Peisandros*, *Hyperbolos*, and *Kleophon* (405), where we find the familiar elements of comedy's caricature of the demagogue: foreign origins, non-Attic speech, crooked behaviour, an unflattering portrait of his mother, rude and arrogant attitude, and servile origins. Certain other titles might imply topical and even political themes: *Greece* or *Islands*, *Feasts*, *Ambassadors*, and *Alliance*. Four plays suggest comedies with a literary, intellectual, or metatheatrical theme: *Spartans* or *Poets*, *Theatre-Police*, *Sophists*, and *Stage Properties*. So far we have a comic poet in the style and manner of Aristophanes. But about one-quarter of his output consists of burlesques of myth: *Adonis*, *Europe*, *Zeus Behaving*

[58] Sommerstein (2000) would date *Peisandros* to the Lenaia of 421.
[59] On this debated issue, see Mastromarco (1975), Luppe (1972), and Storey (2002).

Badly, *Io*, *Laios*, *Long Night*, and *Phaon*. It is tempting to conclude that these belong to the latter part of his career—as mythological burlesques become exceedingly common in the fourth century (what we call Middle Comedy)—and that the political and topical plays belong to his earlier years. Thus he would have had two styles during his career and can be seen as a poet leading, not following, the trends in comedy. The longest fragments of Platon (frr. 188–189) belong to his *Phaon*, dated to 391, which Rosen ("Plato") argues are very much in the spirit of Middle Comedy with their emphasis on obscure cults and the niceties of cooking.

5. *The Final Generation*

The later poets of Old Comedy seem to pale against the great names of the 420s. Many are but names, with few titles attested. Perhaps the comments of Aristophanes (*Frogs* 92–95) on the state of tragedy after the deaths of Sophokles and Euripides apply equally to comedy around the turn of the century, apart from Aristophanes and Platon: "[T]hese are mere leftovers, empty words, a swallows' chorale, who bring their art down, who if they are granted just one chorus, are gone, after pissing on tragedy just once". But we can say something useful about three of the poets of this period: Archippos, Strattis, and Theopompos.

First there is ARCHIPPOS (Kassel-Austin II 538–557) for whom the *Suda* (α 4115) attributes one victory, in the ninety-first Olympiad (416/415–413/412). If he is in fact the same Archippos who was involved in the profanation of the Mysteries and thereafter exiled, then this victory must have been in 415.[60] His comedy *Rhinon* refers to Rhinon of Paiania (*PAA* 800615), who was a major figure in the democratic restoration in 403 after the Thirty, and fr. 27 of *Fishes*, his best-known comedy, mentions "Eukleides who served as archon", that is, in 403/402, thus yielding a date after that year. This, then, is a comic poet of the late fifth century. The *Life of Aristophanes* (Koster XVIII 66–67) records that four plays attributed to Aristophanes were assigned by some to Archippos. Is this another instance of collaboration between poets? Was Archippos, like Philonides (Kassel-Austin VII 363–369), a producer for Aristophanes as well as a poet in his own right?[61] The similarities between his *Fishes*

[60] On the possibility that comic poets were involved in the profanation of the Mysteries, see MacDowell (1962, 211).

[61] On this see Halliwell (1989).

(*Ichthyes*) are worth considering in such a light. Six titles and sixty-one fragments appear in Kassel-Austin II.

Two or three seem to be burlesques of myth—*Amphitryon*, *Herakles Gets Married*, and perhaps *Wealth*. Kaibel was keen to find parallels (frr. 37–39) between the last and Aristophanes' *Wealth* (388) and thus to date Archippos' play after 388,[62] but Aristophanes did write an earlier version in 408, and if there are any parallels to be found, they may be with that version. The most interesting of the lost comedies is his *Fishes*, which did for fish what *Birds* had done for creatures of the air. Certain points in common may be found even among the twenty-one fragments that survive. Fr. 17 mentions a priest (for which we may compare *Birds* 863–894), fr. 23 records how one Hermaios mutilates the fish he sells (cf. Philokrates at *Birds* 1076–1083), fr. 27 proclaims a decree between fish and men (cf. *Birds* 1072 ff.), and fr. 28 has Melanthios the fish-eating gourmand bound and handed over to the fish (cf. his mention at *Birds* 151 and the similar fate for Philokrates at *Birds* 1084–1087). If, as seems likely, fr. adesp. 1146 (Kassel-Austin VIII 1146)—the "Comoedia Dukiana"—comes from Archippos' *Fishes*,[63] then we then would have over sixty lines of the comedy, the most extensive remains after Eupolis' *Demes*. The fragments contains a not very inspiring dialogue between two characters expatiating on the merits of the *silouros* (sheat-fish), where one finally declares, "Isokrates has never made such a praise of Helen as you have delivered over the sheat-fish". The problem is that Isokrates' *Helen* is usually dated to the 370s, and we would have to downdate the *Fishes* to that date—unlikely in light of the reference to "Eukleides who was archon" (fr. 27) and Melanthios (fr. 28)—or move the date of *Helen* to the 390s or even earlier.

STRATTIS (Kassel-Austin VII 623–660) deserves to be better known and more highly regarded. The *Suda* (c 1178) lists fifteen titles, while one of the ancient commentators (Koster VIII 2) gives a total of seventeen plays. On this evidence he was as prolific a comic poet as Eupolis. We have ninety fragments. If his name is correctly restored at *IG* ii^2 2325.138 (the Victors' List for the Lenaia), then he won one victory at that competition. Some of the κωμῳδούμενοι are people familiar from the later plays of

[62] Kaibel ap. Kassel-Austin II 550–551, presumably on the assumption that if there are borrowings involving Aristophanes, it is he who is the original and not the other way around.

[63] On the attribution of this fragment to *Fishes*, see Luppe (1993), Csapo (1994), Dettori (1997).

Aristophanes: Kinesias the poet, who was the title character of a comedy; Laispodias (fr. 19); Thrasyboulos (fr. 20); Lais (fr. 27); Sannyrion (frr. 21, 57). According to Σ *Frogs* 146, his *Atalante* is "much later than *Frogs*", and thus his career is usually put from ca. 400 to ca. 370.

He seems, like Aristophanes, to have been especially fond of plays that parodied poetry and tragedy. His *Orestes the Man* (Anthroporestes) contains (fr. 1) one of the several comic allusions to the actor Hegelochos' verbal gaffe in *Orestes* (408). His *Lemnomeda* seems to have been a combined parody of Euripides' *Andromeda* and his *Hypsipyle*, and the titles of *Medea*, *Philoktetes*, *Chrysippos*, *Phoenician Women*,[64] and *Myrmidons* all suggest parodies of tragedy. His *Kinesias*, which may owe much to Aristophanes' caricature of him at *Birds* 1373–1409, contains the fine line, "this is the tent of the chorus-killing Kinesias" (fr. 16), turning on the double meaning of σκηνή (tent, stage building). The ancients (Σ *Frogs* 153, 405) were of the opinion that Kinesias had been responsible for bringing an end to the choregia and hence the chorus, but it is more likely to be a comment on the quality of his poetry. Like Aristophanes Strattis made jokes at other comic poets: Sannyrion (frr. 21, 57) and Philyllios (fr. 38). There are personal jokes in Strattis, but few that are political.

Another lesser light of the period is THEOPOMPOS (Kassel-Austin VII 708–749), who appears on the Victors' Lists with such late minor poets as Nikophon and Polyzelos and had two victories at the Lenaia (*IG* ii^2 2325.129). The *Suda* (θ 171) gives a total of twenty-four plays, an anonymous commentator seventeen (Koster VIII 1). We have secure evidence for nineteen or twenty comic titles. Aelian (fr. 99) has a confused story about Theopompos the comic poet being cured by the god Asklepios and describes a stone memorial of that cure. But Aelian calls Theopompos "son of Teisamenos" and, as *Teisamenos* is an attested comedy by Theopompos, I suspect that something in that play—a narrative like that at *Wealth* 628–748, but couched in parabatic or metatheatrical terms—may be the inspiration for that account. As fr. 61 (*Teisamenos*) mentions Akestor, who is a comic target as early as 422 (*Wasps* 1221) and fr. 40 (*Boys*) Laispodias, a κωμῳδούμενος of the 410s (*Birds* 1569), we should place the beginning of Theopompos' career in the 410s. Since fr. 58 (*Soldier-Women*) refers to Anytos (the accuser of Sokrates) in 399, while fr. 16 (*Sweet and Happy*) makes fun of Plato and fr. 19 (*Theseus*)

[64] Fr. 46 begins with the first words of Euripides' *Phoenician Women*.

Isaios, these plays must be well into the fourth century. Thus a career of 410 to at least 380 is indicated.

Among the titles and fragments, we find the burlesque of myth: *Admetos*, *Althaia*, *Aphrodite*, *Theseus* (fr. 18 suggests a journey to Persia), *Odysseus*, *Penelope*, *Sirens*, *Phineus*. There are also hints of the hetaira-play in his *Nemea* and *Pamphile*, perhaps also in *Althaia* and *Aphrodite*—fr. 5 makes fun of Philonides, the object of Aristophanes' joke at his relationship with Nais at *Wealth* 304. Of the hundred or so fragments, about a dozen contain personal jokes, and two titles (*Kallaischros*, *Teisamenos*) could indicate plays about contemporary political figures, but neither reference is secure. *Kallaischros* could just be name made up of opposing terms (καλός + αἰσχρός—cf. Ἡδυχαρής), and *Teisamenos* a mythological comedy about the son of Orestes. *Soldier-Women* (Stratiotides) could be a comedy of the same sort as *Lysistrata* or *Assembly-Women*—fr. 58 refers to Anytos, the democratic politician and accuser of Sokrates. If Teisamenos does allude to the lawgiver of the late 400s (*PA* 13443), then this might be a political comedy like *Knights* or *Marikas*. I suspect that we have a comic poet in transition, as the political and topical comedy of the fifth century yields to something different in the fourth.

6. *Themes of Old Comedy: The Golden Age*

Both ancient and modern critics have tended to believe that all Old Comedy will have resembled the aggressive topical comedy written by Eupolis, Kratinos, and Aristophanes, an assumption that the evidence does not support. Aristophanes has the advantage of having survived and of becoming the exemplar for all subsequent critics, but it is clear that Old Comedy was not a uniform genre, no more than all modern television comedies will all be the same. Aristophanes, I suspect, wanted to concentrate on his personal and politically directed comedy and thus eschewed certain other sorts of comedy—for example, the theme of the Golden Age or the burlesque of myth; for the latter he preferred to write parodies of individual plays by Euripides. A brief look at the fragments and titles of "the rivals" shows just how broad the scope of Old Comedy really was and how varied were the comedies being presented in the late fifth century.

One theme that we do not find in Aristophanes is that of the Golden Age, the ideal place with an ideal life. This goes as far back as Homer and Hesiod, where the heroes live on the Islands of the Blest (*Odyssey*

4.561–569; *Works and Days* 156–173), or to the first of Hesiod's ages of man (*Works and Days* 109–120). Comedy found much in the traditional account of the de-evolution of humanity that it could exploit. There is always good entertainment to be had from the comparison of modern reality with an ideal Utopia, when our present does not match up to a better age in the past.

Utopias can be located in the past (paradise lost), in the future (paradise regained), or somewhere out there (paradise found), and all three can be found in Old Comedy. Athenaios (267e–270a) presents, in chronological sequence, selections from various comic ideals. His first example is Kratinos' *Wealth-Gods*, dated by some on shaky grounds to 430 or 429, but possibly as much as a dozen years earlier, where the Utopia is plainly in the past—when Kronos ruled, men diced with bread loaves, and cakes fell out of trees (fr. 176). This is followed by Krates' *Beasts*, where two speakers seem to be debating (frr. 16–17) the details or the realisation of a future Utopia.[65] Telekleides' *Amphiktyons* (fr. 1) has an unknown speaker outline the delights of a past Utopia, where "all necessities came automatically" and "men were fat then and very much like giants". Pherekrates' *Miners* (frr. 113–114) intriguingly locates Utopia not "out there", but "down there", in the underworld with an emphasis on the gastronomic delights to be found there, while his *Persians* (frr. 137–139) presents an ideal life "out there", presumably in Persia or in the future—the future tenses at fr. 137.5, 6, 10 may just mean "when you get there".

Aristophanes did not write whole comedies on this sort of theme, although a "great idea" permeates many of his comedies, whose realisation will create or restore a happier situation. At the end of *Knights*, Demos has returned to a better time, the goal of the son in *Wasps* is to make his father happy and comfortable, while *Birds* does to some extent create a Utopia "out there"—that is, among the birds—and the two last plays (*Assembly-Women* and *Wealth*) certainly create ideal communities. But what seems to be missing is the *bios automatos*, the rivers of compliant food and drink. Aristophanic comedy is full of references to the delights of drinking and eating, but not in the context of an ideal society.

Lacking full plays, we cannot access the implicit contrast in these lost plays, the contrast of an ideal society with a modern reality that is inferior.

[65] The point of this debate is unclear, but it is not what we get in *Wealth*, where one speaker (Chremylos) supports and the other (Poverty) opposes the new order. Ruffell (2000, 463) is content to accept the explanation of Norwood (1931, 149) that they are debating how to achieve the new order.

There are hints in Kratinos' *Wealth-Gods* that the older gods are rectifying things at Athens by eliminating those whose wealth has been unjustly obtained, a theme that will recur in Eupolis' *Demes* and Aristophanes' *Wealth*. Eupolis wrote a comedy called *Golden Race* (*Chrysoun Genos*), but does that mean that the comedy was ironic, that a modern, inferior Athens is compared to a past Utopia or that Athens today is anything but "golden"? What would be interesting is if any of these creations turned out to be not so ideal. *Birds* and *Wealth* have both been read this way, and the extant version of *Clouds* ends with the recantation of the great idea.[66]

There is a minor variation on this theme in the 410s, in comedies about the departure from ordered society for the wilderness. We know of Pherekrates' *Wild Men* (420), where according to Plato (*Protagoras* 327d), life in the city was not contrasted favourably with life among the misanthropic *agrioi*. The fragments are few, but they do show that a primitive sort of life was described and that describing "the depravity here" could be a good subject for comedy. *Birds* takes up this theme, for the two heroes leave Athens for a life among the birds because they are fed up with the problems of city life, and in the end they create a new Athens in the air, with all the problems removed. We wish that we knew more about Krates' *Beasts* or Archippos' *Fishes* to tell us how comedy handled the interaction between humans and animals. Finally, from the 410s we have Phrynichos' *Hermit* (414) whose main character sounds rather like Menander's Knemon in *Dyskolos*: "I live the life of Timon, no wife, no slave, sharp-tempered, unapproachable, never laugh or chat, my own person" (fr. 19). Timon seems to be in vogue in the 410s—mentioned also at *Birds* 1547–1549 and *Lysistrata* 808–820—and we are able to detect in the comedy of the 410s the theme of the individual exploring the boundaries of the ideal community.[67]

[66] On *Birds* see Dobrov (1997a), where the first five studies present the plays in various critical lights; that by Hubbard is especially harsh. For a more optimistic reading, see Sommerstein (1987, 1–6) and MacDowell (1995, 221–228). On *Wealth* see the summary at Sommerstein (2001, 13–20).

[67] See Ceccarelli (2000), who discusses *Beasts* but not *Fishes*. This theme may owe more than a little to contemporary interest in the *apragmon* (the uninvolved man). See Carter (1986) here.

7. *Burlesque of Myth*

The first reaction to a new and successful book or movie or television show is to copy, often shamelessly or with little that is new or original or artistically good. Witness the flood of fantasy novels, usually in threes, that followed the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, the bold-faced imitations of the first James Bond movies in the 1960s, or the inferior science-fiction films that tried to live up to the brilliantly original and exuberant *Star Wars* (1977). The second reaction is usually parody. If something is set on a pedestal, often on too high a pedestal, a natural human reaction is not to emulate, but to make fun and bring down. Hence *Star Wars* was followed by *Spaceballs*, a close parallel for what Aristophanes and Strattis would do to the plays of Euripides, since it depends for its effect on a close knowledge of one original text. In a sense making fun of what was serious was embedded in Greek drama since the introduction of the satyr-play, written by the tragic poet and making humour out of the same tragic universe and its characters—not without reason was satyr-play called τραγῳδία παίζουσα ("tragedy kidding around—"—Demetrius *On Style* 169).

With the exception of his last two plays, *Aiolosikon* and *Kokalos*, Aristophanes seems to have avoided the pure burlesque of myth, preferring to write parodies, often full-length, of specific tragedies by Euripides. In this he would be followed by Strattis. Even in *Wealth,* where he makes a comic song out of the story of Odysseus and the Cyclops (290–322), his model is a specific one: the *Cyclops* by Philoxenos. As Eupolis also appears to have avoided the mythological burlesque, we have tended to downplay this sort of play in Old Comedy, and too often we see in the handbooks that statement that it was Middle Comedy that was dominated by the burlesque of myth. Indeed, it was a major component of comedy in the first half of the fourth century, but the evidence shows clearly that it was also a common feature of comedy in the 430s before the advent of Aristophanes and Eupolis.[68] The political and topical comedy that came into vogue in the 420s would dominate the genre for a generation, and it is not until the next century that mythological burlesque reemerges as perhaps the principal theme in Middle Comedy.

As many as one-third of the securely attested comedies of Kratinos may have been burlesques of myth. The hypothesis shows that *Dionys-*

[68] Nesselrath (1995) is a welcome exception to the critical trend.

alexandros was a parody of the Judgement of Paris, with Dionysos filling in for Paris; other comedies would include *Runaways,* in which fr. 53 was spoken by Theseus about his comic encounter with Kerkyon; *Nemesis,* in which Leda is instructed to incubate and hatch the egg of Nemesis (fr. 115); *Odysseus and Crew,* which was a parody of *Odyssey* 9; *Wealth-Gods* (the release of the Titans); *Men of Seriphos*, with the adventures of Perseus; and *Chirons,* where fr. 253 shows that these formed the chorus. Most appear to belong to the 440s and 430s, although *Men of Seriphos* should on the basis of frr. 227–228 belong to the 420s. Some may depend upon a particular text—*Odysseus and Crew* on *Odyssey* 9, *Wealth-Gods* perhaps on the Prometheus plays—but the one we know best, *Dionysalexandros*, does not appear to be parodying any one version of the story. The extent to which these burlesques of myth were integrated with a serious political theme is often overestimated,[69] although fr. 118 of *Nemesis* ("come, o Zeus, god of guests and of the head") does bring Perikles into a story involving Zeus. But this does not make the entire play a political allegory directed at Perikles. Similarly, the last sentence of the hypothesis to *Dionysalexandros* reveals that "in the play Perikles was very convincingly made fun of bringing the war on the Athenians", but it is dangerous to conclude that the entire comedy was an extended political allegory with Dionysos meant to stand throughout for Perikles.

At least five of Hermippos' comedies appear to be mythological burlesques: *Agamemnon*, *Europe*, *Kerkopes*, *Fates*, and *Birth of Athena*. This last title is the earliest example of a comic sub-genre, the divine birth,[70] a theme found earlier in the *Homeric Hymns* (Apollo, Hermes) and in satyr-play. It would reappear as a theme later in the comedy of the fourth century. Of the other comic poets before Aristophanes, Kallias wrote a *Cyclopes*, Myrtilos a *Titan-Pans*, and Phrynichos an early play that contained a scene with a humorous treatment of the story of Andromeda, where a drunken old woman replaced the princess in distress.

As we have seen, the leading comedians of the high period of Old Comedy (425–400) tended to avoid the mythological burlesque, particularly Eupolis and Aristophanes. Platon does belong to this age and did write several burlesques of myth, but these may belong to his later career, when this form was especially popular. Those comedies that can be dated

[69] Especially by Schwarze (1971), for whom Perikles lies beneath these parodies of myth.

[70] Studied in detail by Nesselrath (1995).

to his earlier career seem to be of the political comedy that Aristophanes wrote. But both of the known titles of Kantharos (*Medea*, *Tereus*), a minor poet who won at the Dionysia of 422, could be burlesques of myth, but equally well parodies of tragedy.

In the last years of Old Comedy and into the heyday of Middle Comedy, the burlesque of myth achieves its greatest popularity. The didaskalic entry for *Wealth* (388) shows that three of the other plays belong to this theme (*Admetos*, *Adonis*, *Pasiphae*). A quick glance through the titles that can be reasonably dated to the years 410 to 380 reveals just how prevalent such plays are, especially the plays by Philyllios, Alkaios, Theopompos, and Nikochares. Aristophanes in his last two comedies turned to this form, and Araros, the most successful of his sons, wrote an *Adonis* and a *Birth of Pan*. When we move on to Middle Comedy, the works of Anaxandridres and Antiphanes—less so of Alexis—contain a substantial number of burlesques of myth.

A variety of themes and subthemes can be seen to operate in the burlesque. We have play-titles about the births of gods and heroes (Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysos, Pan, Herakles, Perseus). Three deities particularly lend themselves to comedy: Herakles, the not overly intelligent glutton; Hermes, the god who crosses boundaries, who is found in *Peace*, *Wealth*, *Dionysalexandros*, Phrynichos fr. 61, and very probably at Kratinos fr. 115 (*Nemesis*); and Dionysos, whose misadventures as the antihero are a familiar and favoured theme (*Frogs*, *Dionysalexandros*, *Babylonians*, Eupolis' *Officers*, Magnes' *Dionysos*, Archippos' *Dionysos Shipwrecked*, Aristomenes' *Dionysos in Training*, Polyzelos' *Birth of Dionysos*, and Hermippos fr. 77).

8. *Comedy of Ideas*

Readers new to Aristophanes and Old Comedy will be struck immediately by the range of humour that they encounter, from the low—bowel humour, scatology, and slapstick—to the sophisticated comedy of ideas, the sustained parody of Euripides or Pindar, and the jokes against Sokrates or the Sophists. It will not do to say that the latter would appeal to a minority audience of intelligentsia, since in a popular competition, a poet is unlikely to alienate the majority of his spectators. We should suppose that the Athenian theatre-going public could and did appreciate this sort of sophisticated humour and that Aristophanes' claim at *Frogs* 1109–1118 is not exaggerated:

> [I]f you two are afraid that the spectators may not be swift enough to get the finer points of what you say, have no fear on that score, since things aren't like that any more. They are seasoned veterans, each one has a book and understands what's smart. Their natures are first-class, and have been very fine tuned now. So don't be afraid, but get right into it, because these spectators are really smart.

We may suspect, but cannot prove, that Aristophanes was in fact the clever and smart poet that he claimed to be, more so than his rivals. The fragments do allow us to make some conclusions about how the others employed the comedy of ideas.

Parody will, of course, include the burlesque of myth, and that was a feature of Old Comedy in the 440s and 430s. But apart from *Odyssey* 9 and Kratinos' *Odysseus and Crew*, it is hard to find parody of specific texts, and even that is not to a contemporary text, as Aristophanes and Strattis would do to the plays of Euripides. Kratinos' *Wealth-Gods* might possibly parody the Prometheus-plays, especially if those tragedies are not by Aeschylus, but rather a later creation of the 430s. Allusions to and parodies of Archilochos, the first of the iambic poets, are found in Kratinos—beginning with a play title, *Archilochoi*, of which frr. 3, 6, and 11 contain verbal echoes of that poet—and we recall that Platonios (2.1–2) does mention his "emulation of Archilochos". Other fragments of Kratinos that show a use of sophisticated and elevated language and metre are frr. 62 (telesilleans and archilocheans), 237 (cretics), and 258–259 (the clever recasting of Perikles and Aspasia as Zeus and Hera). But we cannot determine what literary source, if any, lies behind these last two.

One final passage from Kratinos takes us from the realm of poetry to philosophy, the statement of Σ *Clouds* 95 that the analogy of the sky as a giant chafing-dish at *Clouds* 95–97—"That's where men live who say that the sky is a giant chafing-dish (*pnigeus*) which surrounds us and that we are the coals (*anthrakes*)"[71]—had already been used by Kratinos in his *All-Seers* (*Panoptai*—fr. 167). The so-called Enlightenment of the fifth century was not something abstruse and restricted to serious thinkers, but could become the stuff of popular comedy. Aristophanes may accuse the spectators of failing to appreciate his new and sophisticated comedy (*Clouds* 518–562, *Wasps* 1043–1050), but *Clouds*' "failure" may be due as much to the brilliance of Kratinos' *Wine-Flask* as to the accusation that *Clouds* was over the heads of the Athenians. The 420s in fact witness

[71] The joke turns on a pun between *anthropoi* (men) and *anthrakes* (coals).

a spate of comedies with the theme of philosophers and ideas. Aristophanes' first play, *Banqueters* (427), featured an old man with two very different sons—it does not take much effort to see a theme of education and behaviour here.[72] Eupolis' *Goats* (424?) had a sophistic teacher called "Prodamos" who was teaching an old farmer how to dance. Ameipsias' *Konnos*, named after a famous musician and produced with *Clouds* at the Dionysia of 423, contained a chorus of "thinkers" (*phrontistai*); fr. 9 shows that Sokrates was a character in that play as well. Eupolis' *Spongers* featured Protagoras as one of Kallias' ménage of Sophists; Sokrates may well have appeared in this comedy as well. Σ *Clouds* 96 in fact states that Eupolis in his comedies attacked Sokrates more vehemently than Aristophanes "in the whole of *Clouds*". Telekleides, in two iambic tetrameters from an unknown play (fr. 41), connects Sokrates with Euripides: "Mnesilochos is the one who bakes a play for Euripides, but it's Sokrates who laid the kindling". Everything we know about Telekleides suggests a date before the début of Aristophanes, and thus jokes directed at Sokrates and Euripides were not new with Aristophanes.[73]

Comedy fastened not only on the distinctive physical traits of Sokrates and the other philosophers but also on their ἀδολεσχία (talking nonsense) and on what they taught: "making the inferior argument appear superior" (*Clouds* 112–115), the finer points of physics (*Clouds* 143–216, Kratinos fr. 161, Eupolis fr. 157), and grammar and μουσική (as in Eupolis' *Goats*). One other aspect of the intellectual, especially Sokrates, may be glimpsed from time to time: his fondness for the company of attractive young men. In the *Life of Isokrates* we hear that "the comedians were in the habit of making fun of important people, as they bring Sokrates on stage in love with young men". This might show up also with Protagoras in Eupolis' *Spongers*, where Kallias would still have been in his twenties in 421.[74]

9. *Domestic Comedy*

Old Comedy is essentially comedy of the polis, or at least the plays and fragments that we know best, while the comedy of Menander is comedy of the oikos. For Aristophanes the contemporary city, with its

[72] See Cassio (1978) on this early play.
[73] The best study of Sokrates in the fragments is that of Patzer (1994).
[74] Davies (1971, 263).

personalities, issues, and even its geography, is never far away, but in New Comedy, while we are conscious of an urban setting, it is rarely more than a backdrop. Aristophanic comedy does have its domestic setting. In *Knights* the city has become the household of Demos (the people), in *Wasps* the basic issue is preventing Philokleon from leaving his house for the jury-courts, and in *Lysistrata* the women have turned the acropolis into their own household. But the city is more important than these domestic settings. By the time that we get to Menander, the house is everything. Relationships are all important, be they father-son, boy-girl, brother-sister, or husband-wife, and the plots on which these plays depend have to do with the adventures within these relationships. There is very little of this in the Aristophanes that we possess, although the *Life of Aristophanes* records that in his last play, *Kokalos*, "he brought on stage seductions and recognitions, in which he was followed by Menander". But in his high period, there is not much that will prefigure Menander, apart from a few cheeky and loquacious slaves.

We have only hints of the settings of the lost plays, but in several cases we can discern a house and a domestic life inside. Kratinos' *Wine-Flask* featured the poet's wife and a chorus of friends; the implication is very strong that the setting was the house of Kratinos, to which the drunken poet will at one point return—compare the last scene of *Wasps*, produced eight months later.[75] Eupolis' *Spongers* was certainly set at the house of Kallias, where a major party is being planned and executed. The opening scene of Plato's *Protagoras* may owe much to this comedy.

Much of domestic comedy will turn on the female roles in comedy. Henderson and others have fastened on the year 411 (*Lysistrata*) as a watershed in the comic portrayal of women—"there are no earlier examples of a female protagonist like Lysistrata … female speaking parts in earlier plays are personifications … figures from mythology … or relatives of prominent men".[76] Henderson's thesis *is* somewhat borne out by looking at the comedies that we can date before 411. These are as follows: personifications, including Comedy in *Wine-Flask* and Tyranny in Pherekrates' *Tyranny*; figures from myth, including Helen in Kratinos' *Dionysalexandros*, Leda in his *Nemesis*, perhaps in Kallias' *Atalantai*; and

[75] The parallels between Kratinos in *Wine-Flask* and Philokleon are explored in Sidwell (1995) and Biles (2002).

[76] J.J. Henderson (1987b, xxviii). See also MacDowell (1995, 229): "For us, comedy about women begins with *Lysistrata*".

women connected with famous men, including Hyperbolos' mother in Hermippos' *Bread-Wives* and Eupolis' *Marikas*.

But I wonder about his dismissal of certain women as "mythological". I assume that he means that these would not be "real" women in domestic settings, but surely there was good humour to be had in giving Leda and Helen real personalities and real human interactions. Euripides had been producing his plays about "bad women" in the 430s, and comedy could easily have picked up on some of this theme. Surely the depiction of women as sex-crazed, wine-swilling gossips did not begin with *Lysistrata* in 411. In *Wine-Flask* both Comedy as the true wife and Methe as the mistress could have had substantial roles. There are also early plays with female choruses, such as Kratinos' *Thracian Women* and *Runaways* and Hermippos' *Bread-Wives*, which would have allowed for a good comic depiction of women.

The comedies of Pherekrates show that there was a major role for women outside the strictures laid down by Henderson, plays that are very likely before 411.[77] His *Korianno*, of which several fragments remain (73–82), reveals a scene of women entertaining one another, including drinking (the ever-present comic vice of women), with one character named "Glyke". Athenaios (567c) suspects that Korianno was a hetaira (cf. ἐϱᾶν in fr. 77), and we may wonder if *Thalatta*, *Petale*, and perhaps also *Pannychis* were also hetaira-comedies. Pherekrates is attested by one anonymous writer on comedy (Koster III 9) as having refrained from personal humour and as having introduced new themes, and it makes better sense if this was a feature of his whole career and not just a later development. We do not have enough evidence to conclude whether these comedies had the sort of linear plot that we find in later comedy, with the mistaken assumptions, recognitions, and reunions that populate the comedies of Menander and Roman Comedy. This is very likely the result of Euripides' plays with a happy ending (Romantic Tragedy). There is very little of any sort of "romance" in the remains of fifth-century comedy; the earliest would appear to be the love-scene at *Assembly-Women* 877–1111. There may be one exception here. In the *Life of Isokrates* we hear that "the comedians were in the habit of making fun of prominent people, as they bring Sokrates on stage in love with young men". Perhaps it was not a question of "boy meets girl", but "boy meets man".

[77] See J.J. Henderson (2000) for a more developed version of his thesis.

10. *Political and Topical Comedy*

Some recent critics find the traditional date for the institution of comedy (486) significant to the political life of the day, the institution of ostracism, and the reaction against the aristocrats who allegedly supported the Persians. But there is no real evidence for any sustained political or topical theme before the comedy of Kratinos and the other poets of the 440s and 430s. These were crucial years for Athens: the peace with Persia, the hostilities and truce with Sparta, the ostracism of Thoukydides son of Melesias, and the revolt of the Samians. Kratinos, described by Platonios as "an emulator of Archilochos" (2.1–2 Perusino) and by Aristophanes as "sweeping all his enemies headlong" (*Knights* 528), wrote an early play called *Archilochoi*, while the fragments reveal a definite and strong political theme. It was he in my view who first made good comedy out of topical personalities and issues.

This sort of comedy reaches its height during the last three decades of the fifth century, and it was Aristophanes and Eupolis who raised it to this height. The most significant development was perhaps the demagogue-comedy, which Aristophanes created with *Knights* in 424 and in which he was followed (plagiarised?) by the rest. In this comedy a political allegory is established throughout the drama: the city becomes a house, the people (δῆμος) become the householder (Demos), and the politicians become household slaves. Kleon is thinly disguised as Paphlagon, whose name denotes both "Paphlagonian" (a region where Athens would acquire her slaves) and the verb παφλάζειν (to shoot one's mouth off). Kleon was the first of what were called the "demagogues"—new politicians from a commercial background (Kleon owned a tannery) who had made their money rather than inherit it. In the 420s, following the death of Perikles, they become a new force on the Athenian political scene. In *Knights* Paphlagon-Kleon is revealed as the dishonest corruptor of Demos (the People) and is defeated, not by a member of the traditional aristocratic elite, but by an even worse figure: a sausage-seller from the depths of the agora. Eupolis wrote his *Marikas* about Hyperbolos in 421, and Platon created three such comedies in the 410s and 400s without bothering to hide the names of his targets (*Pesiandros*, *Hyperbolos*, *Kleophon*). Theopompos' *Teisamenos* and Archippos' *Rhinon* may be other examples of this theme.

The hostile caricature of the demagogues has led many to conclude that Aristophanes and the other comic poets were advocating a deliberate right-wing stance in their plays—that these demagogue-dramas were

not just comedy, but political satire. It must be remembered that these demagogues were something new in the 420s and thus good comic material. Once Aristophanes won the prize in 424 with *Knights*, others would inevitably follow his lead and write more demagogue-comedies. It is to Aristophanes' credit that *Knights* was his only foray into that subgenre. This also has consequences for assessing the seriousness of the caricature of the demagogues, for once a joke becomes established, other poets can exploit the same themes without necessarily sharing in any satirical motivation.

That said, there does seem to be a definite bias on Aristophanes' part against Kleon. They did come from the same deme (Kydathenaion), and several critics have seen a personal animosity behind the jokes,[78] while de Ste Croix and Sommerstein have shown that political leaders of what we would call "the left" are far more likely to be attacked in comedy than the aristocrats or what we would call "the right".[79] Again, this may owe as much to the expectation of spectators as to personal bias. Audiences are notoriously conservative, and we can see what seems to have happened when Aristophanes got ahead of his audience with the first version of *Clouds*. One final point to be considered is Rosen's observation that a "blame-poet", such as Archilochos and Hipponax from the iambic tradition, is expected to have a personal target, a bête noire of his very own, to attack in his poetry.[80] Thus Kratinos will have his Perikles, Aristophanes his Kleon, Eupolis his Hyperbolos, and the whole thing may be more of a literary fiction than actual fact. As far as Kleon is concerned, Dorey has pointed out that our knowledge of him depends upon three hostile sources (Aristophanes, Thucydides, Aristotle) and that we never hear from those who supported Kleon in the assembly, especially over Mytilene at Thucydides 3.36–50, and those who elected him general. Heath, in his rejection of just about any serious political theme in Aristophanes, lays considerable stress on the fact that in 424, *Knights*, with its outright attack on Kleon, wins the first prize, and then six weeks later the Athenians elect Kleon general.[81] If we encounter these sorts of difficulties with a poet whose works survive, we can only imagine

[78] Lind (1990), Cartledge (1990, xv–xvi).
[79] De Ste Croix (1972, 355–376), Sommerstein (1996).
[80] Rosen (1988, 59–82) and Dorey (1956).
[81] Heath (1987). In another paper, Heath (1990b) argues that nothing said by a poet in comedy is to be taken seriously.

the difficulties in assessing the seriousness of Kratinos' caricature of Perikles or the attacks of Eupolis and Platon against Hyperbolos.[82]

11. *"To Make Fun of by Name"*

For the ancient, personal humour (τὸ ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν, to make fun of by name) was the sine qua non of Old Comedy, in part because it was absent from later New and Roman Comedy. When an ancient writer attempts to explain the origins of Old Comedy, he usually tries to account for the presence of personal jokes and to provide a rationale for these jokes. For example, one late anonymous source (Koster XIb) describes how some people from the countryside (κῶμαι, villages) were wronged by some city folk and achieved their revenge by going to the city at night and denouncing the wrongdoers. This explanation both accounts for the etymology of κωμῳδία (village song) and provides a redeeming social value: exposing people who have behaved badly. When other writers attempt to explain the change in comedy in the fourth century, they concentrate on the disappearance of personal humour, which they would attribute to outside agency, such as the revenge wreaked on Eupolis by Alkibiades because of the former's *Dyers* or an actual law prohibiting personal humour. Here the locus classicus is a passage from Horace's *Art of Poetry* (281–284): "Then there came Old Comedy, which enjoyed considerable acclaim, but its freedom descended into a licence that had to be controlled by law. A law was passed, and the chorus fell silent, having lost its right of shameful abuse". Another passage from Horace makes the point that these targets deserved to be singled out publicly; they were "bad" people, and thus comedy's defence would be that it said "bad things" about "bad people": "Eupolis, Kratinos, and Aristophanes, and indeed all the other poets of Old Comedy, would single out with great freedom anyone who deserved to be pointed out, for being a wicked person or a thief, an adulterer, a pickpocket, or notorious for any reason" (Horace *Satires* 1.4.1–7).

Certainly the plays of Aristophanes and the fragments of the other poets are full of these jokes against real people of the day, often (one imagines) sitting among the spectators. Anyone coming to Old Comedy for

[82] For a very differing view of the political seriousness of Old Comedy, see Heath (1987), Halliwell (1993), J.J. Henderson (1990), Redfield (1990), MacDowell (1995), Sommerstein (1996), and McGlew (2002).

the first time is struck immediately by the constant stream of allusions—the point of which we, at 2500 years' remove, can only guess at—and is tempted to ask, "Who are these people?" The jokes can take the form of quick "one-liners" that barely disturb the flow of the comedy:

Peisth Do you think you could find your way home from here?
Euelp From here, not even Exekestides could. (*Birds* 10–11)

Sometimes a series of "one-liners" is put together to form a "variation on a malicious theme", as at *Clouds* 347–356, where the clouds assume the shapes appropriate to the humans they have seen, or *Birds* 1290–1299, where the messenger from Athens plays the following game: if X. were a bird, what bird would he be? In places, entire songs are devoted to a particular target—the marvellous Kleonymos-tree at *Birds* 1470–1481 or the mock praise of Kleon at *Knights* 973–996, the only time in the play that he is called "Kleon" rather than "Paphlagon".[83]

Finally, a character in a comedy may be a real Athenian, usually named outright, although a periphrasis is occasionally employed (Paphlagon in *Knights*, Lysistrata for Lysimache, Marikas for Hyperbolos). The best-known examples are Sokrates in *Clouds* and the appearance of Euripides in at least six of Aristophanes' comedies (*Acharnians*, *Thesmophoriazousai*, *Frogs*, *Preview* [*Proagon*], the lost *Thesmophoriazousai*, and Plays [*Dramata*]). In *Acharnians* as many as six characters are meant to be real people. Among the other poets we may cite Kratinos' self-portrayal in *Wine-Flask*, the plays with Hyperbolos (Eupolis' *Marikas*, Hermippos' *Bread-Wives*, Platon's *Hyperbolos*), and Platon's *Peisandros* and *Kleophon*. Eupolis in particular made comedy out of prominent people, witness his *Spongers* (Protagoras and Kallias), *Autolykos* (Lykon and his family), *Baptai* (Alkibiades), *Demoi* (Perikles), and *Officers* (the general Phormion).

As with the interpretation of comedy's political themes, personal humour presents the problem of how serious the poets are. There is a tendency, not restricted to first-year undergraduates, to assume that if one makes a joke about someone or something, then one is out to "get" that person. In other words, there is a serious purpose behind the joke, and comedy then crosses the line into satire. Thus we read that when Kratinos makes fun of Perikles and calls him "Zeus", he is engaging in political satire against Perikles' conduct of the War or his political position at

[83] I agree with Rogers (1910, 136) that Aristophanes intended this song to enter public circulation and be used against Kleon in the upcoming election, hence the use of the name Kleon.

Athens. Eupolis' *Golden Race* is an ironic juxtaposition of the traditional Utopia against an inferior modern Athens led by Kleon—see fr. 316: "O fairest city of all the cities that Kleon oversees, how fortunate you were before and now will be even more so … how would one not be happy to be part of such a city, where it is possible for the ugly and inferior in appearance". And here, it is argued, we can see "die beiden Komiker hier Arm in Arm verbunden zur Kampf gegen den verhassten Demagogen".[84] Hermippos composes an aggressive song against Perikles (fr. 47) and can thus be ranked among the political opponents to Perikles in the late 430s.[85] Critics, both ancient and modern, seem to have difficulty with the concept that a comic poet could make fun of a target unfairly or unjustly. Pseudo-Plutarch makes a revealing comment: "Aristophanes seems to have written his slanderous and bitter passages for the envious and malicious" (*Moralia* 854d).

Platonios (1.2–31 Perusino) makes the good observation that Old Comedy, with its emphasis on personal jokes, is intimately connected with the vigourous democracy that flourished at Athens in the fifth century. Cicero (*De Republica* 4.10, fr. 11) argues that this sort of humour "was allowed by law", others that comedy enjoyed a formal dispensation from the Athenian law on slander (see Lysias 10), but it is unlikely that, with one exception, making fun of people by name had any connection with Athenian law. That one exception has been mentioned above, the decree μὴ κωμῳδεῖν, passed "in the archonship of Morychides [440/39]" and repealed "in the archonship of Euthymenes [437/6]". As we know that comedies were produced in 437 (*IG Urb. Rom.* 216.1–6), μὴ κωμῳδεῖν must mean "to make fun of by name" and not "to perform comedies". Horace's law that brought personal humour to an end or Tzetzes' attribution (Koster XIa 1.87–101) of this development to Alkibiades are but critical fictions.

[84] W. Schmid (1946, 116).
[85] Schwarze (1971, 101–109).

CHAPTER SEVEN

ARISTOPHANES

Ralph M. Rosen

There is good reason why Aristophanes has become the touchstone for all students of ancient Greek comedy. Apart from whatever literary virtues have earned him the admiration of audiences across the centuries, he provides the only surviving examples of complete comedies from one of the richest periods in the history of the genre. Whereas all the other examples of fifth-century comedy consist of disembodied fragments, history has left us a corpus of eleven complete plays by Aristophanes, which span the poet's entire career and even offer occasional self-conscious claims about his own role in the development of comic drama. These plays may well represent one-quarter of his total production[1] and, as such, probably offer a tolerably good overview of Aristophanes' comedic style and theatrical practices. But when we consider the fact that from the year in which comedy was given formal sanction at the City Dionysia (486 BCE) to the production of Menander's *Dyscolus* in 316, Athenian audiences collectively would have seen perhaps as many as 1,700 comedies at their two annual festivals,[2] it puts our precious eleven plays of Aristophanes in

[1] Titles from another thirty-three plays have come down to us, although probably some of these are not genuine. The fragments of the lost plays are collected in Kassel-Austin *PCG* III 2. See also Gil (1989) and Carrière (2000). Compared to the number of surviving texts from the tragic poets, the ratio of extant Aristophanic texts to known titles is remarkably high: for Aeschylus we have no more than 10 percent of his known production, for Sophocles little more than 5 percent, for Euripides nearly 20 percent.

[2] The performance of comic drama was made "official" at the City Dionysia (that is, an archon granted a chorus for comic performances) in 486 BCE (See P. Wilson 2000, 21; Aristotle *Poetics* 1449b2 notes that comedy was granted choruses relatively late). From that year to the performance of Menander's *Dyscolus* in 316 (a somewhat arbitrary time span, but one that would embrace the entire period of Old Comedy), we may calculate: 170 years x 2 festivals per year (City Dionysia and Lenaea) = 340; five comedies were performed at the City Dionysia, and possibly as many at the Lenaea (the comic choregia seems to have come late to the Lenaea—possibly 440 BCE—but some sort of comedy was probably performed there even before that; for the evidence of the comic choregia at the Lenaea, cf. Csapo and Slater 1995, 133–134), so Athenians may have seen as many as ten comedies per year during this period.

sobering perspective. In the end, however revealing the surviving plays are, they remain only the smallest sample of fifth- and fourth-century comic drama. This fact is worth remembering as we begin a discussion of Aristophanes' life and work, as a corrective to the natural tendency to assume that all comic drama from this period looked more or less like Aristophanic comedy or that Aristophanes was solely responsible for the ways in which the genre developed.

The preceding chapter has amply shown how stylistically distinctive, often innovative, Aristophanes' fifth-century contemporaries could be. Nevertheless, it was Aristophanes whom ancient scholars and *literati* came to value as the supreme representative of Old Comedy, for many of the same reasons that we esteem him today: for example, the fluidity of his spoken verse, the diversity of his choral songs, or the balanced interplay between farcical and cerebral humor. Their canonization of Aristophanes ensured for him a particularly privileged status throughout antiquity, which eventually eclipsed the reputations of his principal rivals, such as Cratinus and Eupolis.[3] Despite the fact, however, that the survival of Aristophanes' plays and his particular status in antiquity are, at least in part, a function of idiosyncratic historical and cultural forces, his importance for our own understanding of Greek comedy cannot be exaggerated.

We turn in this chapter, therefore, to a description and assessment of Aristophanes' career and work, which form our richest store of comic texts from the classical period. The body of this chapter will attempt as far as possible an overview of Aristophanic comedy that will address some of the central questions and controversies it perennially raises. For obvious reasons this chapter must be selective in the topics it can address and the individual plays it singles out for discussion. Fortunately, readers wishing a detailed narrative account of basic information about Aristophanes can consult any number of reliable sources,[4] so we are at liberty

[3] On the selection of canonical comic poets, see Pfeiffer (1968, 160, 204–205). See also Aristophanes *testimonia* no. 4 in Kassel-Austin, III 2, p. 6 (from the anonymous *de Comoedia*). On Cratinus and Eupolis, see Storey (ch. 6) in this volume. For a selection of non-Aristophanic comic fragments (including some from Cratinus and Eupolis) that illustrates the diversity of fifth- and fourth-century Attic comedy, see S.D. Olson (2007).

[4] See Gelzer (1971) for a detailed compendium of information about Aristophanes, including a basic description of the plays and an account of many basic interpretive questions. Dover (1972) offers detailed plot summaries and discussion of each play; See also Dover (1968a) for a useful survey of twentieth-century scholarship on Aristophanes up to the mid-1960s. MacDowell (1995) provides a wealth of information about the plays, with discussion of more recent scholarship. See Silk (2000a, 13–21) for a useful overview

in this chapter to focus on such fundamental issues as how we discern meaning in his plays, especially in the light of a comic poet's unrepentant fondness for irony and the notorious difficulty of penetrating his many masks. How, finally, do the generic aspects of comedy—themselves so intertwined with performance contexts and contemporary audience reception—affect our ability to use the comedies as evidence for fifth-century history and culture, as well as for a history of Aristophanes' own life?

1. *The Problem of Aristophanes' Biography*

Very little is known about the life and career of Aristophanes beyond what we can glean from the plays themselves. The dangers inherent in extrapolating biographical information from literary texts have by now been reasonably well internalized by most scholars, but the craving to know something about the historical Aristophanes shows no sign of abating in most readers. Part of the reason for this, at least, has to do with the nature of Old Comedy itself, a genre in which the poet will often pique his audience's curiosity by interjecting what purports to be his own "voice."[5] Despite the fact that the plots of Aristophanes' plays are not explicitly autobiographical, he nevertheless finds ways, as we shall see, in which he manages to construct a distinct autobiographical personality for himself. This sense that there lurks somewhere beneath the surface of the plays an authentic authorial voice, and the implicit assumption that Aristophanes is attempting to establish some sort of personalized relationship with the audience, make it easy to understand why critics have been so eager to see a "real" Aristophanes behind the autobiographical intimations that pepper his plays.

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of Aristophanic chronology, and Storey and Allan (2004, 169–229). Commentaries with Greek text and facing prose translation now exist for all the plays in Sommerstein (1980–2001). Other modern commentaries on individual plays (each of which may be consulted for bibliographical information on earlier commentaries) are: *Acharnians*: S.D. Olson (2002); *Clouds*: Dover (1968b), Guidorizzi and Del Corno (1996); *Wasps*: MacDowell (1971); *Peace*: S.D. Olson (1998); *Birds*: Dunbar (1995), Zanetto and Del Corno (1987); *Lysistrata*: J.J. Henderson (1987b); *Thesmophoriazusae*: Prato and Del Corno (2001), Austin and S.D. Olson (2004); *Frogs*: Dover (1993), Del Corno (1985); *Ecclesiasuzae*: Ussher (1973), Vetta and Del Corno (3rd ed. 1998); *Wealth*: Torchio (2001). For the bibliography on Aristophanes from the middle of the twentieth century, cf. Dover (1957); bibliography from 1957–1967, cf. Murphy (1972).

[5] See Goldhill (1991).

In order to confront the question of Aristophanes' biography, we must begin by laying out two fundamental, interrelated problems—the one historical, the other theoretical. The first concerns simply the nature of the evidence about Aristophanes as a historical figure, the second the dynamics of the genre in which he composed. Biographical evidence for poets of the classical period is notoriously sparse and unreliable, and Aristophanes is arguably even less well served than his contemporaries.[6] There is very little external evidence from Aristophanes' own time,[7] and what passes for a biographical narrative about his life and career begins to appear only in the Hellenistic period, when prefatory hypotheses to editions of the plays and learned treatises about comedy would sometimes include seemingly biographical facts.[8] A few of their statements seem reasonable enough to accept as historical facts—for example, details of Aristophanes' family or the chronological sequence, and success or failure, of his plays—since such areas would have been matters of the public record.[9] But the bulk of the claims made about the poet sound suspiciously as if they were simply inferred from the plays by either earlier (now lost) generations of commentators or the authors of the hypotheses themselves. The Hellenistic hypotheses, for example, tell us quite convincing stories of particular relationships Aristophanes had with various contemporaries, or they ascribe to him certain political leanings; they even mention aspects of his physical appearance—all reported as genuine biography. None of these details can be independently corroborated, and scholars have repeatedly shown that there was a strong tendency in antiquity for a poet's biography to be constructed from what readers found in his works.[10] In the case of Aristophanes, any attempt to evaluate such

[6] Lefkowitz (1981, 105–116).

[7] Our earliest extended reference to Aristophanes occurs in Plato's (ca. 429–347 BCE) *Symposium* (cf., for example, Aristophanes' speech at 189–193). Although this work was probably written in the fourth century, it dramatizes, and doubtless fictionalizes, events that took place in 416 BCE (a dinner party in celebration of the tragic poet Agathon's first victory). One of the rare fifth-century references to Aristophanes comes from his rival Cratinus (fr. 342 K-A), who refers to someone as a "euripidaristophanizer" (on which cf. O'Sullivan 2006).

[8] See Gelzer (1971, col. 1396) and Koster (1975, 133–150).

[9] On the various public inscriptions pertaining to dramatic performances at Athens (e.g., identifying authors, choregoi, victories, and dates of performances according to presiding magistrates) cf. Csapo and Slater (1995, 40–43).

[10] Lefkowitz (1981, vi–x, 136–138) states the case well.

biographical information intersects with our second, theoretical, problem—namely, the nature of comic genres.

The fundamental questions to ask are these: How much of what appears within a fictional dramatic work that relies on such strategies as humor, fantasy, and satire can we legitimately use to construct a poet's biography? If some aspect of the poet's life or physique happens to be mentioned within an otherwise fictional plot, must we always believe it? Across cultures and time, comedy is a genre that thrives on exaggeration and a distortion of the truth, so what entitles us to decide at any given point when a statement within such a work is truthful or not? Comedic works such as the plays of Old Comedy, which engage in satire and mockery in particular, complicate the matter even further by encouraging the audience to take the poet's subjective voice at face value. If a poet mocks an individual—especially an individual from real life known to the audience—for some sort of personal affront, he immediately creates a pretense of historicity and reality, and the audience is cleverly made to feel almost foolish if they disbelieve the poet's dramatized indignation.

As Ian Storey and Douglas Olson have illustrated in their respective chapters (2 and 6), the poet of Old Comedy had ample opportunity to intrude explicitly into the fictional action of the play and thereby concoct a personal history for himself and a personal relationship with his audience. The most common place in the plays for this to occur was the parabasis, where the chorus leader could step forward and claim to speak on behalf of the poet himself. Here the chorus leader, among other things, might complain on behalf of the poet to the audience or even blame them for his mistreatment, and the self-righteousness of this stance has routinely been seen as rooted in autobiography. Other moments of putative self-presentation beyond the parabasis, to which we will soon turn, have also been detected in Old Comedy, and these can be especially difficult to evaluate, since these passages are often assumed to be even more sincere simply because they are so anomalous. Although Aristophanes himself never appears in his plays, nevertheless, he teases his audience by appearing to ventriloquize through his fictionalized characters, and he thus leaves us ultimately uncertain about the truth of any autobiographical claim.[11] With no place else to turn for contemporary evidence about Aristophanes, scholars have seen no choice but to make as much as

[11] See Dobrov (1995b) for a broader discussion of ventriloquism in Aristophanes.

they can of these self-referential passages. In the following section, therefore, we will examine in greater detail this interaction between the plays and the poet's biography, as well as some of the methodological nuances involved in balancing literary genre with historical reality.

Aristophanes' earliest extant play, *Acharnians*, provides an exemplary starting point. This play, produced in 425 BCE, has long been regarded as one of his most successful, and it is easy to see why: it offers a fine balance between sophisticated satire (especially in its extended parody of Euripidean tragedy) and rambunctious physical comedy, it interweaves historical and political events with pure fantasy, and, above all, its protagonist, allegorically named Dicaeopolis (Just City), tempts the audience to see the poet's own voice behind the character.[12] *Acharnians* is set during the early years of the Peloponnesian War and tells the story of Dicaeopolis' privately brokered peace with the Spartans. In the course of his efforts to convince a hostile chorus of Acharnians that his deal with Sparta was justified, some of his lines unquestionably imply that Dicaeopolis has at least momentarily become the poet. But does this mean that what he speaks is actual autobiography? Two passages in particular are routinely cited as such. In the first, 377–382, Dicaeopolis enumerates his fears of speaking in front of the assembled Acharnians, and he recalls an incident from the year before:

> αὐτός τ' ἐμαυτὸν ὑπὸ Κλέωνος ἄπαθον
> ἐπίσταμαι διὰ τὴν πέρυσι κωμῳδίαν
> εἰσελκύσας γάρ μ' εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον
> διέβαλλε καὶ ψευδῆ κατεγλώττιζέ μου
> κἀκυκλοβόρει κἄπλυνεν, ὥστ' ὀλίγου πάνυ
> ἀπωλόμην μολυνοπραγμονούμενος[13]
>
> And I know about myself, what I suffered at Cleon's hands because of last year's comedy. He dragged me into the council chamber and began slandering me, telling glib-mouthed lies about me, roaring at me like the Cycloborus, bathing me in abuse, so that I very nearly perished in a sewer of troubles.[14]

[12] E.g., Hubbard (1991, 45): "It should … come as no surprise that Dicaeopolis is not only the spirit of Comedy in the abstract, but is also, on a more specific level, the voice of the comic poet." For other views of an allegorical Dicaeopolis, cf. Bailey (1936), E.L. Bowie (1988), and N.W. Slater (2002, 253n33).

[13] Greek text is cited throughout from N.G. Wilson's two-volume Oxford Classical Text edition (2007), unless otherwise noted.

[14] Translations, with occasional modification, are from Alan Sommerstein's editions of the complete plays of Aristophanes (1980–2002).

Dicaeopolis makes the same point again in his formal speech to the Acharnians at 497 ff., where, now masquerading as the Euripidean character Telephus, he introduces his self-defense as if in the voice of Aristophanes:

Δι. μή μοι φθονήσητ', ἄνδρες οἱ θεώμενοι,
εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀθηναίοις λέγειν
μέλλω περὶ τῆς πόλεως, τρυγῳδίαν ποιῶν.
τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγῳδία.
ἐγὼ δὲ λέξω δεινὰ μέν, δίκαια δέ.
οὐ γάρ με νῦν γε διαβαλεῖ Κλέων ὅτι
ξένων παρόντων τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω.
αὐτοὶ γάρ ἐσμεν οὔπι Ληναίῳ τ' ἀγών,
κοὔπω ξένοι πάρεισιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι
ἥκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι·
ἀλλ' ἐσμὲν αὐτοὶ νῦν γε περιεπτισμένοι·
{τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχυρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω.}

Be not indignant with me, members of the audience, if, though a beggar, I speak before the Athenians about public affairs in a comedy. Even comedy is acquainted with justice; and what I have to say will be shocking, but it will be right. This time Cleon will not allege that I am slandering the city in the presence of foreigners; for we are by ourselves and it's the Lenaean competition, and there are no foreigners here yet; neither tribute money nor troops have arrived from the allied cities. This time we are alone, ready hulled; for I reckon the immigrants as the civic bran.

At several other points in the play as well (515–516, 659–664) Dicaeopolis likewise alludes to a quarrel with Cleon the year before, and it is no wonder that scholars ever since antiquity have extracted from such passages an actual event in the life of the poet. On several occasions in the scholia (the exegetical remarks of ancient commentators), it is inferred from these passages that the demagogue Cleon brought a lawsuit against Aristophanes for allegedly slandering him publicly in his production of *Babylonians* in 426 BCE.[15] An outsider might well wonder why scholars have become so exercised over whether Cleon was really involved in some sort of legal wrangling with the poet, but the reason is simple enough: if we could feel certain about the historicity of this occurrence, then it would be one of the very few datable biographical events in Aristophanes' life. This explanation will perhaps satisfy those who feel on principle that it is always better to know something about an author if we have the chance, but even others who value biographical data less for its own

[15] For discussion see MacDowell (1995, 43).

sake tend to think differently about a literary genre if they can demonstrate an explicit interrelationship between the poet's life and work. This explains, therefore, how a rather localized controversy over some specific allusions to Cleon in *Acharnians* could have evolved into a far more fundamental one about how Old Comedy "worked."[16] It is essentially impossible, of course, to *prove* that the plays offer us accurate biographical or historical information, but many prefer what one might call a commonsense approach: if a passage seems to offer autobiographical information about the poet, then why should we be reluctant to take it as such? Many, if not most, scholars maintain this as a basic methodological principle in approaching Aristophanic self-referentiality, assuming with little unease that the quarrel between Aristophanes and Cleon mentioned in the plays reflects a historical occurrence with reasonable accuracy.[17] As MacDowell (1995, 42) has succinctly put it, the lines in *Acharnians* quoted above "must refer to some real incident; it would have no point as merely a fictional event in the life of the countryman Dicaeopolis."

If Aristophanes had been writing nonfictional prose treatises instead of comic plays, then it would be much less difficult to take at face value any account he might give of an altercation with Cleon. But the question of Cleon's alleged lawsuit against him is immediately complicated by the fact that it is attested only within a work of fictional, imaginative literature. The matter is subtle, for just because an event is mentioned in a literary work does not necessarily mean it did not occur. It would not be terribly surprising if we were somehow able to confirm that Cleon did in fact take Aristophanes to court in more or less the way Dicaeopolis claims he did. But a literary work needs to satisfy certain generic demands before historical accuracy, and it would therefore also not be surprising to hear that the account of Cleon's lawsuit was constructed in order to fulfill certain literary goals—for example, creating the persona of a comically oppressed poet, marshalling a vote of sympathy from the audience for the poor poet against a particular target, and so forth. Any type of literature in which the author adopts a stance of moral indignation and undeserved

[16] Many scholars of Aristophanes have weighed in on the Cleon controversy in one way or another; to cite only a few more recent examples: Carey (1994), Rosen (1988, 59–82), Hubbard (1991, 41–53), Mastromarco (1993, 344), MacDowell (1995, 42–45), Kugelmeier (1996, 162–164), S.D. Olson (2002, xxix–xxxi), Brockmann (2003, 147–156), and Sommerstein (2004).

[17] On the more general problems of extrapolating historical information from Aristophanes, see Gomme's seminal article (1938). De Ste. Croix (1972, 355–371) offers a trenchant response and still remains fundamental reading.

beleaguerment, as we find in Aristophanic comedy, and which engages in invective or personal mockery, makes it especially difficult for the audience to separate fiction from reality, if only because the author works so hard to convince them of the urgency of his predicament. Stephen Halliwell has written eloquently on several occasions about the pitfalls of deriving biographical information from the plays,[18] and a few scholars have taken a similar approach,[19] but it is clear that the tendency to take the first-person pronouncements in Aristophanes more or less at face value remains strong among classical scholars.[20]

2. *Aristophanes' Early Career and the Question of "Apprenticeship"*

The problem of interpreting the allegations of a historical quarrel between Cleon and Aristophanes is particularly interesting because it is so easy to see the story—whatever its basis in historical fact—as part of the poet's attempt to create a specifically *literary* persona for himself, a gesture that need not always have any basis in truth. Factual or not, one cannot deny that the story of the quarrel abets the comico-satirical

[18] See Halliwell (1980). More recently Halliwell (1998, xlv) cautions that to treat Dicaeopolis' speech in *Acharnians* "as programmatic of the author's own stance, as has often been done, is to tear it out of the context of parody and metatheatre in which it is teasingly embedded." Halliwell, however, does not seem to doubt that Cleon launched a lawsuit of some sort against Aristophanes, only that we cannot trust that it was described accurately within the plays. See also Halliwell (1991a).

[19] E.g., Heath (1987) and Rosen (1988, 59–82), where I argued (p. 78) that the details of the quarrel between Arisophanes and Cleon 'can easily be seen as an eleborate fiction, capable of traveling from play to play, gaining new additions and twists, and furnishing the poet with new inspiration.' This is not to deny that there might, in fact, have been a real quarrel between them, only that regardless of how much actual history and biography lie behind the Aristophanes-Cleon quarrel as it is portrayed in the plays, it is far more revealing to consider how Aristophanes deploys the quarrel as a function of his comic poetics, easily manipulated by the poet and mediated by his literary and dramaturgical concerns. See also Rosen (2000) 24.

[20] A modern parallel may serve, however, as a cautionary reminder that comedians have no trouble claiming to have ongoing relationships with celebrities, which then become part of an ongoing repertoire. On the American television comedy show of the 1970s, *Saturday Night Live*, the comedian Chevy Chase famously concocted a relationship with then-president Gerald Ford. Details of their interaction, and the political satire that arose from these, migrated from show to show for as long as Ford was in office, after which time he ceased to be topical, and the show's writers could move on to the next—temperamentally different, but equally mockable—president, Jimmy Carter.

poet's traditional desire to establish himself in an antagonistic relationship with certain targets, and usually highly conspicuous ones at that.[21] But while it is safe to say that any putatively autobiographical allusion in the plays serves in some way the artifice of a poet's self-representation, some material is less implicated in the dynamics of comedy itself, and so appears more reliable as a biographical guide. When it comes to the logistical details of Aristophanes' earliest performances, for example, there are fewer obstacles to gleaning some actual aspects of the poet's biography through internal evidence than there are with the Cleon story. In this section, then, we will look at the second major question of Aristophanes' career, namely, his apparent use of producers to stage his early plays. The evidence from the plays, and from the Hellenistic hypotheses about them, is limited, but together they provide enough information to afford us not only some biographical information that seems basically secure, but also a rare glimpse into the institutional procedures of fifth-century literary culture.

Although we tend to think of our earliest surviving play, *Acharnians*, as one of Aristophanes' most successful, it is likely that the poet did not see it through to performance on his own, but rather relied on the assistance of a producer named Callistratus. This point is mentioned at the end of the first hypothesis preceding the text of the play in the manuscripts, and as other sources make clear, Aristophanes used producers on a number of other occasions as well. Callistratus is said to have produced, in addition to *Acharnians*, also *Babylonians* (426), *Birds* (414), and *Lysistrata* (411). Another man, Philonides, seems to have produced the fragmentary *Amphiaraus* (414), *Frogs* (405), and possibly Aristophanes' very first

[21] Cf. Horace's famous assessment of Old Comedy in the opening lines of *Sermones* 1.4:

> Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae,
> atque alii quorum comoedia prisca virorum est,
> si quis erat dignus describi quod malus ac fur,
> quod moechus foret aut sicarius aut alioqui
> famosus, multa cum libertate notabunt.
>
> The poets Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes, and the other men who constitute the Old Comedy, used to brand with great freedom anyone who deserved to be portrayed as a blackguard and a thief, a lecher or a cut-throat, or as notorious in any other way. (trans. Rudd)

For discussion of this passage in relation to the satirical poetics of Aristophanes in particular, see Rosen (2007, 5–8).

known play, the fragmentary *Banqueters* (427).[22] The precise duties of a producer at this time are never explicitly spelled out, but it is sometimes assumed that he would function much as a modern director, overseeing stagecraft, props, actors' delivery, and so on (the Greek word is διδάσκαλος, teacher).[23] We can only surmise the exact reasons why playwrights might or might not have used producers for a given performance, but Aristophanes provides us with at least one reason: basic diffidence in his abilities as a young poet. This would not, of course, explain why he would have used producers for his later plays, when he was already experienced and well esteemed, but he makes it clear enough that in his early plays, at any rate, he relied on a producer to help him learn the ropes as a fledgling comic poet. This much emerges from a famous passage in the parabasis of *Knights*, 512–516, where the chorus leader, speaking in the first-person of the poet, defends himself against vaguely scandalous allegations of ineptitude:

> ἃ δὲ θαυμάζειν ὑμῶν φησιν πολλοὺς αὐτῷ προσιόντας
> καὶ βασανίζειν, ὡς οὐχὶ πάλαι χορὸν αἰτοίη καθ' ἑαυτόν,
> ἡμᾶς ὑμῖν ἐκέλευε φράσαι περὶ τούτου. φησὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ
> οὐχ ὑπ' ἀνοίας τοῦτο πεπονθὼς διατρίβειν, ἀλλὰ νομίζων
> κωμῳδοδιδασκαλίαν εἶναι χαλεπώτατον ἔργον ἁπάντων·
> πολλῶν γὰρ δὴ πειρασάντων αὐτὴν ὀλίγοις χαρίσασθαι·
>
> As to the things that he says many who have approached him have been surprised at and questioned him about, namely that he had not long since asked for a chorus in his own name, he asks us to explain to you about that. He says that it was not out of mere stupidity that he remained so long in his former position, but because he thought that comic production was the most difficult thing in the world (for many a man makes advances to the Comic Muse, but she grants her favours to few), …

Later in the same passage (ll. 540–544), after enumerating the tribulations of some of his famous predecessors at the hands of a merciless Athenian public, he continues:

> χοὗτος μέντοι μόλις ἀντήρκει, τοτὲ μὲν πίπτων, τοτὲ δ' οὐχι
> ταῦτ' ὀρρωδῶν διέτριβεν ἀεί, καὶ πρὸς τούτοισιν ἔφασκεν
> ἐρέτην χρῆναι πρῶτα γενέσθαι πρὶν πηδαλίοις ἐπιχειρεῖν
> κἄτ' ἐντεῦθεν πρῳρατεῦσαι καὶ τοὺς ἀνέμους διαθρῆσαι
> κἆτα κυβερνᾶν αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ …

[22] On the controversy over who produced *Banqueters*, see Cassio (1977, 19–20). Cf. also MacDowell (1995, 35–41).

[23] As MacDowell (1995, 36n1).

> Indeed he only just held his own, sometimes coming to grief, sometimes not. It was in apprehension of that sort of treatment that our poet kept waiting. Besides, he thought that one ought first to be an oarsman before trying one's hand at the helm; then after that be bow-officer and look out for squalls; and only then steer for oneself.

Considerable controversy has arisen in recent decades about what exactly these passages mean. They certainly imply that *Knights* was the first play Aristophanes produced by himself and under his own name, but can we infer a more specific progression of activity in the seafaring metaphor lines of 541–544? Mastromarco (1979) and Halliwell (1980) suggested that a threefold *cursus* lies behind the stages of the naval metaphor. First is a period in which Aristophanes contributed comic material to other writers; this early stage would have preceded the production of *Banqueters* in 427. Next, from 427–425, he would have written his own plays, but had them produced by others. Finally, with the production of *Knights* in 424, Aristophanes would finally have struck out completely on his own, thus heralding the third stage of his early development. Such a scenario gains some plausibility from a tantalizing passage in the parabasis of *Wasps* (422), in which the chorus leader, again speaking as the poet, reflects on his early career (ll. 1018–1022):

> τὰ μὲν οὐ φανερῶς ἀλλ' ἐπικουρῶν κρύβδην ἑτέροισι ποιηταῖς,
> μιμησάμενος τὴν Εὐρυκλέους μαντείαν καὶ διάνοιαν,
> εἰς ἀλλοτρίας γαστέρας ἐνδὺς κωμῳδικὰ πολλὰ χέασθαι·
> μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ φανερῶς ἤδη κινδυνεύων καθ' ἑαυτόν,
> οὐκ ἀλλοτρίων ἀλλ' οἰκείων Μουσῶν στόμαθ' ἡνιοχήσας.
>
> At first it was not openly but secretly, giving assistance to other poets, slipping into other people's stomachs in imitation of the method of the seer Eurycles, that he poured forth many comic words; after that he did try his luck openly on his own, holding the reins of a team of Muses that were his, not someone else's.

Those who favor three stages to Aristophanes' early career see in the word "secretly" of line 1018 a period during which the identity of the poet would have been unknown as he contributed comic material to the productions of others; this would have been before 427, the year in which he had *Banqueters* performed. MacDowell has been the most vocal critic of this proposal, and he objects to taking "secretly" quite so literally. As he says, "'secretly' does not refer to deliberate concealment, but just means that Aristophanes' authorship of the early plays was not publicly announced or generally known, because they were

presented not by him but by Philonides or Callistratus."[24] In fact, as the two sides of this debate make clear, Aristophanes himself was simply not explicit enough in his account of the details of his early career, nor do we have sufficient evidence from other contemporary sources, to allow us to decide the matter definitively one way or another. Aristophanes does, however, offer enough information to suggest that the institutional mechanics of producing a play in fifth-century Athens were fairly complex and nuanced, indicative of a potentially fluid relationship between poet and producer, and of an unstable system of apportioning credit for the various tasks involved in bringing a play to performance.

If we compare the evidence we have discussed for Aristophanes' early career to the evidence for his alleged feud with Cleon, one might well wonder whether the poet's recurrent allusions to an early period of artistic diffidence, at critical parabatic moments of self-construction, might be less trustworthy as actual biography than they may first appear. It is typical for a comic poet to assume the stance of the oppressed underdog who eventually comes into his own and heroically confronts the injustices of the world in a stance of comic indignation and feigned self-righteousness.[25] In fact, Aristophanes' story of his development along these lines could work perfectly as a piece of completely fictional autobiography: "I was so naïve and inexperienced," the poet implies, "that I had to work in secret." Like a latter-day Rodney Dangerfield, he "couldn't get no respect" in his early years. The sentiment is timeless for virtually any comedian, and one might comfortably conclude that, whether it was true or not is, in a real sense, irrelevant to its function within the corpus.

Conversely, whereas in the case of the Cleon controversy, it seems prudent to remain agnostic about the biographical value of the allusions to it in the plays, one may feel more sanguine about seeing actual biography behind the details of Aristophanes' allusions to his early career. Perhaps the main reason for this is the fact that the information we have about the producers with whom Aristophanes collaborated is external to the plays themselves. As we have seen, Aristophanes himself alludes to his

[24] MacDowell (1995, 38). The recent discussion of "Aristophanes' apprenticeship" can be followed through the following: Mastromarco (1979), Halliwell (1980), MacDowell (1982b), Halliwell (1989), Gilula (1989), Hubbard (1991, 227–230), N.W. Slater (2002, 254 n. 34), and Brockmann (2003, 202–251).

[25] See Rosen (2007, 3–42).

professional association with such men only obliquely, yet the Hellenistic evidence cites specific individuals, Callistratus and Philonides, even if they do not always agree on which producer was attached to which play.[26] This information was almost certainly a matter of public record, archived along with other didascalic material. The second reason why we might reasonably credit Aristophanes' statements about his early career is that the topic itself is less central to the construction of a comic persona than are his claims to a personal (and disastrous) relationship with a prominent target. As noted earlier, a bumpy early career is certainly consonant with a comic poet's typical self-presentation, but it is far less generically defining than his relationship with the targets of his mockery.

The distinction between these two stories from Aristophanes' biography is worth dilating upon first of all because it highlights how we might go about evaluating biographical evidence that has its origin in the plays. Past scholars have usually acknowledged the deliberately hyperbolic nature of comedy, as well as its propensity for fantasy and deception, but tend to leap freely from fiction to biography without appreciating fully the methodological subtleties involved in doing so. But the issue goes well beyond these two localized questions of the poet's biography, for it has ramifications for the entire enterprise of interpreting Aristophanic comedy as a whole. Old Comedy is a genre that thrives on the satire of contemporary events and people, reveling in the *realia* of the here and now. In its satirizing and mockery, it assumes a complicity between poet and audience, even when completely fictional characters are the ones engaged in such activity. The first questions that come to mind throughout are these: Whose point of view is being represented? Can we ever presume to answer this question? And, for that matter, is it *necessary* for us to answer it? Readers will probably never agree on the last question, but it is an important one to ask since it foregrounds the truly vexing problem of how we handle comic material in light of the generic forces that guide its creation. There are, in short, many possible reasons why Aristophanes might include what he does in his plays, and any attempt to find meaning in them—including the extrapolation of historical and biographical information—must be mediated by the status of comedy as a representational, poetic form.

[26] See note 24 above.

3. *Aristophanic Comedy*

Critics have often proposed comprehensive and synthesizing accounts of Aristophanic comedy, yet as previous chapters have made clear, Old Comedy was such an eclectic, hybridized genre that, even when considered in the hands of a single poet, it ultimately seems to defy a unifying characterization. Few today would want to argue as schematically, for example, as Francis Cornford once did, that all Aristophanic drama can be analyzed in terms of a ritual death and resurrection pattern of a Year-God,[27] though many scholars have still felt a need to find in Aristophanes' comic enterprise some guiding, almost transcendental, principle. Numerous models have emerged, some locating the essence of his plays in an ultimate quest for social or political Utopia, some in a desire to dramatize a perennial, almost cosmic, conflict between things "old" and "new," others generalizing still further by stressing the poet's basic commitment to fantasy. While none of these is ever fully satisfactory, nearly all are in one way or another useful for clarifying the interrelationships among Aristophanes' individual works and articulating the particular idiosyncrasies of his comic ethos and dramaturgy.

Some scholars have preferred to think in terms of developmental or formal principles, dividing Aristophanes' career into distinct chronological periods and ascribing specific compositional methods to each. Thus an Aristophanic comedy may be categorized according to what sort of parabasis it contained (if any), what the role of the chorus was, or what type of plot was used; others might focus on aspects of diction or meter, or how much obscenity or personal invective a given play contained.[28] Sometimes the plays are simply discussed in chrono-

[27] Cornford (1914/1993). Despite the fact that Cornford's approach has been largely repudiated on most points of detail, there are nevertheless important lessons to be learned from his imaginative analyses; see, for example, sympathetic assessments by J.J. Henderson in his prefatory remarks to the 1993 reprint of Cornford (1993, xi–xxxiii), as well as Reckford (1987, 39–40, 447–451). See also Csapo and Miller (2007) for recent scholarship, addressing visual and material as well as literary evidence, on the "origins" of Greek comedy.

[28] Important studies of discrete formal aspects of Aristophanic comedy, each offering its own taxonomic approach to the plays, include Zielinski (1885), a foundational study establishing the terminology of modern scholarship on Old Comedy; Gelzer (1960) on the comic agon; Sifakis (1971a) on parabasis and animal choruses; Rothwell (2006) on animal choruses; Hubbard (1991) and Imperio (2004) on the parabasis; Zimmermann (1985b) on the Aristophanic chorus; A.M. Bowie (1993) on myth and ritual; L.P.E. Parker

logical order, other times they are divided up according to perceived thematic categories: the "women" plays, for example, or the "literary-critical" plays. All such attempts at organizing the plays are of course artificial, and many would ultimately seem to belong to several categories at once (*Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*, for example, are often regarded as "women" plays, but the former can also be discussed as a "war" play, and the latter as a "literary-critical" or "Euripides" play). The potential categories we might impose on the Aristophanic corpus, in short, seem endlessly labile, and none is really any more stable or "natural" than another.

There are, however, several points worth making about Aristophanes and the nature of Old Comedy as a genre, as well as about the interaction between the poet and his audience, and their reciprocal influence on each other. In keeping with the antagonistic dynamic of Old Comedy and the poet's need to find in his surroundings something worthy of mockery, something that would strike a chord in an audience that was pitting his comic sensibility against that of his rivals, Aristophanes naturally gravitated toward topics that generate controversy in nearly all societies: domestic and international politics, celebrity lives and their scandals, popular entertainment, education, and so forth. These are areas in which the slightest eccentricity can seem amusing, especially when exaggerated with caricature and incongruity. Any deviation from "the way things were" is always fodder for a satirist, and Aristophanes is famous for plots that dramatized the conflict between the "traditional old" and the "unconventional new," whether these dramatize old and new generations (e.g., *Clouds*, *Wasps*), political ideologies (e.g., *Knights*, *Ecclesiazusae*), or poetic styles (e.g., *Thesmophoriazusae*, *Frogs*). This explains the general conservative feeling of so many of the plays, an almost wistful yearning for life to remain stable and ordered when the progress of time inevitably ensures that it cannot. It also explains why politicians then in office, for

(1997) on meter; Colvin (1999) and Willi (2003a) on dialect and language; Bierl (2001) on the chorus; and Revermann (2006a) on stagecraft and performance. The proviso of Gelzer (1971, 1420) is worth keeping in mind when looking for formal ways to analyze Aristophanes: "In der formalen Beschriebung der Komödien herrscht eine babylonische Sprachverwirrung, die der sachlichen Verständigung über die beschriebenen Formen abträglich ist. Wichtig ist nur, dass die reichen formalen Unterschiede klar hervortreten und formal Zusammengehöriges als solches erkennbar wird. Die historische und ästhetische Bewertung der Formen und ihrer Verwenduug ist hingegen Sache der Interpretation."

example, or philosopher-professors teaching for pay, were natural targets of comic ridicule: they existed in the here and now, and they had the potential to influence everyone's lives. Any false step of theirs could cause intense anxiety within the demos, and one way in which the Athenians grappled with this anxiety was to reprocess it as comic performance. It is unlikely that comedy did much to change whatever views on political and moral issues they brought with them to the theater (it is often noted, for example, that not long after Aristophanes' unrelieved attack on Cleon in *Knights* won first prize, the Athenians elected Cleon general), but comic poetry would certainly have encouraged them to refine their perspectives on the complex ideological forces that governed their city and their own interpersonal behavior.[29]

As a form of public art, organized and at least partially funded by the state (see ch. 4 on the festivals), Old Comedy necessarily reflected prevailing cultural norms, and its success depended largely on its ability to walk the fine line between questioning (and occasionally subverting) these norms, and merely endorsing them. The generally conservative tendencies of satire were no doubt ultimately reassuring to a democracy that institutionalized the comic performances to begin with. It is difficult to imagine, after all, what group would endorse an art form that seriously repudiated that group's fundamental claims to legitimacy.[30] Generally speaking, as is often noted, Aristophanic comedy presupposes the desirability of a form of democracy as it was practiced in the fifth

[29] Discussion of the "purpose" of Greek comedy—and the effects it might, or should, have on audiences, Athenian or otherwise—began in antiquity at least as early as Plato (who was uncomfortable with, when not indifferent to, comedy; see Rosen [2007, 255–262]) and Aristotle (cf. Janko [1984] on Aristotle's "lost" treatise on comedy) and continues to the present, leaving a vast bibliography. The most recent additions include Silk (2000a), E. Segal (2001), and I. Stark (2004).

[30] Of course, "seriously" is the critical word here; satire need not always imply actual repudiation of the things it attacks, even though this is precisely what the satirist will claim to be after. Or, put another way, the social or political critique found in comedy is so heavily mediated by the generic markers of form and performance that audiences—at least properly acculturated ones—will not normally mistake it for the actual political and interpersonal disputes that arise in the "real," rough-and-tumble world. The question of how "seriously" we should take Aristophanic satire has been addressed by countless scholars over the years; the excursus of de Ste. Croix (1972, 355–371) on "the political outlook of Aristophanes" wrestles in revealing ways with the methodological problems in trying to sort out what is "serious," and thus usefully "historical," in comic satire. For an intelligent examination of the discourse of "seriousness" itself in the criticism of comic literature, see Silk (2000a, 301–349). Other recent discussions include Halliwell (2004), the essays in Ercolani (2002), and Sommerstein (2004).

century.[31] Certainly the ancient testimony, discussed earlier—that Cleon sued Aristophanes for slandering the demos and its politicians in his *Babylonians* of 426—indicates, whatever the details of such a suit might have been, that there were perceived limits to comic ridicule at the time.[32] But as far as we can tell, these limits were never systematically articulated or, for that matter, rigorously enforced. It was probably less the fear of any slander laws that restricted the freedom of comic poets than a finely honed sense of what the audience—the demos itself—would find humorous.

In the light of these observations, it could be said that Aristophanes worked in particular with three broadly conceived themes throughout his extant plays, behind each of which presumably stood a full spectrum of contemporary opinions among members of the audience:

1. The theme of the "Best Leader," which has as its underlying questions: What are the qualities of a good leader of the demos? Who among the Athenians is most fit to rule?
2. "End-of-War" or "Peace" themes. Most of Aristophanes' play were written and performed during the prolonged Peloponnesian War (431–404), which left Athens dispirited, depleted, and open to the oligarchic threats to the democracy of 411 and 404. While most of the fifth-century plays allude to some aspect of the war, opposing it in principle, several plays have explicitly "anti-war" plots:[33] *Acharnians* (425), *Peace* (421), and *Lysistrata* (411). It should come as no surprise that the peace plays were never too far removed from political satire, particularly against those implicated in the formation of war policy.

[31] In the introduction to *Acharnians* Sommerstein (1980, 5) offers a reasonable general portrait of Aristophanes' attitude towards the democracy: "In domestic politics Aristophanes would undoubtedly have called himself a democrat; he may, as in *Knights*, show up what he regards as the weaknesses of the sovereign Demos, but there is no thought of deposing the sovereign: at the end of the play it is not some abstract and politically neutral 'Athens of Old' but the rejuvenated and re-educated Demos himself who is proclaimed 'sovereign of the Greeks.'" See also J.J. Henderson (1990) and Carey (1994).

[32] On the question of "freedom of expression" in Old Comedy, and the controversy over the evidence for legislation against it in fifth-century Athens, see the useful overview in Csapo and Slater (1995, 165–185). For details, see Halliwell (1984a; 2004a; 2008, 243–263), Sommerstein (1986; 2004), Atkinson (1992), and Brockmann (2003).

[33] A cautionary note: the term "anti-war" should not be equated with "pacifistic"; pacifism, at least as we generally conceptualize it, was rather alien to Athenian culture. See Ostwald (1996).

3. Variations on the theme of "Old and New." This is surely the most comprehensive category, and it is occasionally argued that all of Aristophanes' plays in some sense can be analyzed in such terms. Nevertheless, some plots are constructed directly around this theme, whether it takes the form of a debate over education, as in the case of *Clouds* (423/rev. extant version, c. 418?) and *Wasps* (422), or literature, as in *Thesmophoriazusae* (411) and *Frogs* (405). Even the fourth-century plays, *Ecclesiazusae* (392) and *Wealth* (388), which show signs of a transition to New Comedy (see ch. 9), are essentially Utopian fantasies that imagine a new social order that improves upon the old.

4. *The Best Leader? The Political Satire of* Knights

Politics is always good fare for comedy. The stakes are high for the politicians themselves, and their notoriety in society makes them vulnerable to, and often defenseless against, attacks by comedians. The latter answer first to a literary genre and only secondarily, if ever, to facts. Quite a few of Aristophanes' plays can be said to be political in the most general sense of the word—concerned, that is, with the governance of the polis and the balance of sovereignty between individuals and institutions—but none more so than *Knights*. In some ways, *Knights* might be considered the most "Aristophanic" of his plays, despite the fact that readers have never thought it one of his most successful.[34] Throughout antiquity Aristophanic comedy as a genre was typically characterized in terms that apply best to *Knights*, that is, as a literary form that engaged in *ad hominem* mockery against notorious political figures. Even though there is clearly far more going on in most of the plays than mere personal abuse, it is easy to see how a play such as *Knights* might become emblematic of the entire corpus. Invective and vituperation routinely rely on transgressive or at least mildly scandalous diction and attitude, and the relentless pummeling of a single target of the sort that takes place in *Knights*, replete with primary obscenities and other forms of *aischrologia* (as the Greeks would refer to scandalous diction),[35] can hardly fail to make a strong

[34] Norwood (1931, 207–208) surely represents one extreme: "The *Knights* is a bad and stupid play. Certain small passages are excellent, and some important historically; but as a whole this saturnalia of falsetto Billingsgate, this anthology of verbs meaning 'to kick in the stomach' and the like, is astounding after the *Acharnians*."

[35] On *aischrologia* in Aristophanes, see J.J. Henderson (1991a), Degani (1987; 1998),

impression. Many Aristophanic comedies may indeed satirize prominent citizens, but *Knights* is the only play about which it can be said that the plot was, in effect, the attack itself. As such, this play will offer us an excellent entrée into Aristophanic methods of political satire.

Although *Knights* has often been found somewhat excessive, it is in fact much more subtle than its manic stage action and exuberant diction might suggest. To begin with, despite the common wisdom that the play focuses its censure and opprobrium on the demagogue Cleon, none of the central players comes off unscathed by the play's comic indignation. Cleon is undeniably the character around whom the comic action swirls and who essentially defines the terms in which the political satire is formulated, but *Knights* is no simple play of good and evil—nor for that matter, as we shall see, a play that conveys much of a moral center to political activity at all.

Earlier we discussed at some length the problems that arise from the passages in *Knights* that allude to aspects of the poet's autobiography. Those problems are a specific example of the larger question of how we go about interpreting an Aristophanic comedy: like most forms of literary satire, his plays more or less insist that we take their mockery and satire at face value, as an argument for a clear-cut moral stance on an issue, while at the same time deploying a variety of literary strategies to undermine, or at least obfuscate, any consistency of attitude. *Knights* illustrates this procedure ideally throughout the play, for even while its attack on Cleon is about as transparent as can be, all the other characters pitted against him are in one way or another compromised in equally outrageous and humorous ways. Moreover, the play proceeds at an almost breakneck pace, allowing the audience little time for contemplation of the many political and moral issues tossed about by the characters.

The basic plot of *Knights* dramatizes a competition between two slaves for the favor of their master, Demos, an obvious allegory for the Athenian populace. One of these slaves represents Cleon, but is identified in the play only as "Paphlagon," a name that would both call to mind the verb *paphlazein* (to bluster) and suggest that the character was of foreign birth (i.e., from Paphlagonia, a region in northern Asia Minor); both of these associations would have been standard insults to level at an Athenian politician.[36] Two other slaves, unnamed in the manuscripts,

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Rosen (1988), Ercolani (2002), and Halliwell (2004; 2008, 243–263).

[36] On the connection between Cleon and Paphlagon in *Knights*, see Sommerstein (1981, 2–3).

but often identified as the Generals Nicias and Demosthenes,[37] open the play, complaining about the new slave whom their master, Demos, has acquired. When these slaves find out from some stolen oracles that a Sausage Seller is destined to overthrow Paphlagon, they proceed to orchestrate a showdown between these two, first in front of the audience, and then (offstage) in front of the Athenian council (*boulê*). In the second half of the play, after the parabasis, the two compete in front of Demos himself as rival lovers for his affection, and after a series of rambunctious, high-energy, and presumably very loud scenes, the Sausage Seller emerges victorious. Demos, portrayed up to the final scenes of the play as something of a clueless and impotent buffoon, is now reborn (1330) as his robust self of earlier generations, and he atones for his recent listless behavior.

The action of *Knights* clearly reflects the specific political climate of 424, the year it was performed. Cleon had taken most of the credit for the recent Athenian victory at Pylos (425), and his popularity at Athens was high. What does it mean that a play of such satirical virulence as *Knights* could be so successful (it won first prize at the Lenaea that year) when by and large public sentiment could not be said to share the play's attitude towards its primary target? This apparent paradox suggests, it seems, that the audience responded more to the comic strategies of the play, including its technical display of comic diction and character portrayal, than to the implicit didactic claims of the satirical poet demanded by the genre. The anti-Cleon attitude of *Knights* was doubtless representative of views current in some circles at the time, and the play must reflect contemporary disagreements over leadership styles, as well as contemporary prejudices about class and ancestry.[38] But, as we shall see in a moment, the portrait of Demos—the victim of Cleon's demagoguery—is hardly sympathetic itself, and the man who defeats Cleon, the Sausage Seller, is equally boorish and obsequious. We must naturally assume that Aristophanes had his own views about politics and society, but if he really had intended to relate them in this play, they do not amount to much more than the rather bland notion that brash demagogues were offensive. The genius of *Knights* does not lie in the coherence if its political program,

[37] Sommerstein (1981, 3).

[38] There is a large bibliography on the portrayal of Cleon in *Knights* and its relationship to contemporary Athenian politics. Important discussions can be found in de Ste. Croix (1972), Landfester (1967), Edmunds (1987), Ostwald (1986), and Lind (1990); On Aristophanes' Cleon as an emblem of a literary stylistics that replicated contemporary politics, see O'Sullivan (1992, 115–129).

nor in educating a benighted audience about the dangers of demagogues (that debate was already very much alive), but rather in its effectiveness as a sustained comic entertainment that could address profound issues without the need of homiletics.

A closer look at some of the comic and satirical strategies of *Knights* will illustrate the difficulties in locating a stable authorial point of view in the play. In a revealing scene towards the beginning of the play, one of Demos' slaves congratulates the Sausage Seller for being singled out by the oracle as the one to overthrow Cleon. The Sausage Seller is the reluctant hero, mystified that anyone with as undistinguished a background as his would be found worthy of such a role. He claims at 188 ff., for example, that he is basically uneducated and is barely literate:

Αλ. ἀλλ', ὦγάθ', οὐδὲ μουσικὴν ἐπίσταμαι
πλὴν γραμμάτων, καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι κακὰ κακῶς. (188–189)

Ss. But, my good man, I've not even had any education, except for reading and writing, and I'm proper bad at that.

The Sausage Seller's response begins ingenuously and promotes the traditional attitude that intelligence and education are necessary for good leadership. Slave A, however, turns the Sausage Seller's putative liability into a virtue, adding as a joke that his main problem is that he has any education at all:

Οι. Α′ τουτί σε μόνον ἔβλαψεν, ὅτι καὶ κακὰ κακῶς.
ἡ δημαγωγία γὰρ οὐ πρὸς μουσικοῦ
ἔτ' ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους,
ἀλλ' εἰς ἀμαθῆ καὶ βδελυρόν … (190–193)

That's your only impediment, that you know them at all, even "proper bad." The leadership of the people is no longer a job for an educated man or one of good qualities, but for one who's ignorant and foul.

The joke only works, if it runs counter to what one would normally expect as a qualification for good leadership. The Sausage Seller is flattered by the notion of leading the people, but still finds it absurd, given what a serious leader in the real world should be like. Slave A, however, gives further instructions several lines later (214–222):

Οι. Α′ φαυλότατον ἔργον· ταύθ' ἅπερ ποιεῖς ποίει·
τάραττε καὶ χόρδευ ᾽ ὅμοῦ τὰ πράγματα
ἅπαντα, καὶ τὸν δῆμον ἀεὶ προσποιοῦ
ὑπογλυκαίνων ῥηματίοις μαγειρικοῖς.
τὰ δ' ἄλλα σοι πρόσεστι δημαγωγικά,
φωνὴ μιαρά, γέγονας κακῶς, ἀγόραιος εἶ·

ἔχεις ἅπαντα πρὸς πολιτείαν ἃ δεῖ·
χρησμοί τε συμβαίνουσι καὶ τὸ Πυθικόν.
ἀλλὰ στεφανοῦ καὶ σπένδε τῷ Κοαλέμῳ·
χὤπως ἀμυνεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα.

Easy as pie: do the same things you do already. Mix all their affairs together and stir them into a hash, and always try to win people over with little touches of elegantly prepared rhetoric as sweeteners. The other demagogic qualities you possess: a repellent voice, low birth, and you're a typical product of the Agora. You have everything that's needed for public life, and oracles and the voice of Pytho are in agreement. Now crown yourself and pour libation to the god Blockhead, and then let's see you pay the man out.

When the Sausage Seller wonders who will protect him, Slave A reassures him that the Knights, who make up the chorus, are his allies. This group of aristocratic horsemen was known to be antagonistic to Cleon, and its members are described as upstanding, honest, and intelligent people:

Οι. Α′ ἀλλ᾽ εἰσὶν ἱππῆς ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ χίλιοι
μισοῦντες αὐτόν, οἳ βοηθήσουσί σοι,
καὶ τῶν πολιτῶν οἱ καλοί τε κἀγαθοί.
καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ὅστις ἐστὶ δεξιός,
κἀγὼ μετ᾽ αὐτῶν, χὠ θεὸς ξυλλήψεται.
καὶ μὴ δέδιθ᾽· οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἐξηκασμένος,
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἤθελεν
τῶν σκευοποιῶν εἰκάσαι. πάντως γε μὴν
γνωσθήσεται· τὸ γὰρ θέατρον δεξιόν.

But there are the Knights, a thousand fine men, who hate him and will come to your aid, and all who are honest and decent among the citizens, and every man of intelligence in the audience, and myself along with them; and the god will lend his assistance. And have no fear, he's not portrayed with his own face; the property-makers were too frightened for any of them to be prepared to make a portrait-mask of him. He'll be recognized all the same; the audience is intelligent enough!

The number of shifts in the play's apparent sympathies and moral positions is remarkable, but easy to miss in the rapid-fire repartée of the dialogue. Much of the humor of the passage, in fact, depends precisely on this unpredictability of its political and social positioning: one moment Cleon is reviled for his tactics and demeanor, the next moment the solution to the Cleon problem is found in a character (the Sausage Seller) who is functionally and qualitatively no different from Cleon. The chorus is invoked also as an enemy of Cleon and Cleonism, and they are described as moral paragons; but they will also be supporters of the

Sausage Seller, an obvious act of hypocrisy if we were to follow the logic of the passage seriously (as we are not meant to do). Further, in a significant move, members of the audience who support him in his battle with Cleon are aligned with the chorus as "intelligent" citizens (καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ὅστις ἐστὶ δεξιός 228). Yet what kind of intelligence must we ascribe to them if they are to support the shenanigans of a character such as the Sausage Seller? No one in this passage, in short, comes off unscathed by satire, and any attempt at praise is promptly and comically undercut by ridicule. In this madcap contest of scurrility, Cleon is the obvious loser, but it is not easy to see any genuine winners, at least if one is hoping to find a satisfying alternative to Cleon for the non-comic realm.[39]

Indeed, much of *Knights* consists merely in the exchange of insults between the two principal antagonists, Paphlagon and Sausage Seller, with occasional commentary from the chorus and Slave A, urging on their champion to outdo Paphlagon in *panourgia* (roguery) and *thrasos* (brazenness) (cf. ll. 324–334, for example). Some of the exchanges have a highly ritualized feel to them, as, for example, ll. 361–388, which begins thus:

Πα. ἀλλ᾽ οὐ λάβρακας καταφαγὼν Μιλησίους κλονήσεις.
Αλ. ἀλλὰ σχελίδας ἐδηδοκὼς ὠνήσομαι μέταλλα.
Πα. ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπεισπηδῶν γε τὴν βουλὴν βίᾳ κυκήσω.
Αλ. ἐγὼ δὲ βυνήσω γέ σοι τὸν πρωκτὸν ἀντὶ φύσκης.
Πα. ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἐξέλξω σε τῆς πυγῆς θύραζε κύβδα. 365
Αλ. νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ κἀμέ γ᾽ ἆρ᾽, ἥνπερ γε τοῦτον ἕλκῃς.

[39] Many scholars, it should be noted, are less troubled by the Sausage Seller's scurrility and would maintain that the criticism of Cleon remains the predominant goal of the play. See, for example, MacDowell (1995, 107–112), who gives a thorough account of the specific charges leveled against Cleon during the course of *Knights*. His summary is fairly typical of current assessments of the play's attacks on Cleon: "The play must be regarded as a mixture of fair criticism, exaggeration, and lies, motivated not only by a desire to entertain the audience and win the contest of comedies, but also by political disagreement and personal resentment. Aristophanes' aim was not to present an amusing fiction, not on the other hand an objective history. It was to expose Cleon to ridicule and scorn." This statement is indeed disarming in its simplicity and "common sense," but it raises a host of questions, once one begins to think through the implications of an author who engages in "lying" and "exaggeration," as comic poets routinely do. For how easy is it to infer the actual motivations of a poet who obviously has no interest in an objective representation of the "truth" and who, furthermore, puts his satire into the mouths of fictionalized characters? MacDowell is obviously correct about Aristophanes' goal—to expose Cleon to ridicule—but as for his "motivations," there are too many factors at play (poetic, dramaturgical, and historical, to name a few) to allow for a single, simple answer.

Pa *You* won't devour the Milesians' bass and then fall on them like a hurricane.
Ss But I'll eat sides of beef and then buy mining leases.
Pa I'll leap upon the Council and give it a violent shaking.
Ss And I'll stuff your arse like a sausage skin.
Pa And I'll drag you out of doors by the buttocks, head downwards.
Ss By Poseidon, if you drag him, you'll have to drag me too!

Passages such as this, which recur throughout the play, make for obviously comic stage business and distract the audience's attention from a too-strict tally of which antagonist is actually winning the argument at any given point.

Most scholars would agree that one cannot easily extract from such farcical, hyperbolic scenes any sort of underlying coherent message, but one pivotal moment has often been taken to reveal the play's abiding optimistic faith in the Athenian demos as a political institution, and it is worth brief consideration here. Towards the end of the play, after the Sausage Seller and Paphlagon have finished their contest of oracle-mongering in front of Demos, the two leave the stage to prepare for their final showdown in which they will try to flatter Demos and win his sole allegiance. The chorus and Demos sing a short amoebaean song, which begins with the chorus mildly chastising him for his gullibility and susceptibility to flattery:

Xo. ὦ Δῆμε, καλήν γ' ἔχεις
ἀρχήν, ὅτε πάντες ἄν-
θρωποι δεδίασί σ' ὥσ-
περ ἄνδρα τύραννον.
ἀλλ' εὐπαράγωγος εἶ, 1115
θωπευόμενός τε χαί-
ρεις κἀξαπατώμενος,
πρὸς τόν τε λέγοντ' ἀεὶ
κέχηνας· ὁ νοῦς δέ σου
παρὼν ἀποδημεῖ. 1120

Ch. Demos, your rule
is glorious indeed, seeing that all men
fear you like
a man of autocratic power.
But you are easily led astray,
you enjoy being flattered
and deceived,
and every orator
holds you agape, with your mind
present and yet absent!

This is precisely the natural reaction we might expect from a hypothetical straight man in the audience ("how could you be so blind and stupid, Demos?"), watching the ridiculous relationship between the antagonists and Demos unfold on the stage. As such, this stanza is itself essentially a metatheatrical intrusion, as if the author himself pretends to anticipate what a sophisticated audience must already be thinking about his doltish character Demos. But there is a twist: suddenly, and rather jarringly, Demos reveals that he is always fully aware of what goes on around him, and he merely plays along until he is in a position to punish those who flatter and exploit him:

Δη. νοῦς οὐκ ἔνι ταῖς κόμαις
ὑμῶν, ὅτε μ᾽ οὐ φρονεῖν
νομίζετ᾽· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἑκὼν
ταῦτ᾽ ἠλιθιάζω.
αὐτός τε γὰρ ἥδομαι
βρύλλων τὸ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν,
κλέπτοντά τε βούλομαι
τρέφειν ἕνα προστάτην·
τοῦτον δ᾽, ὅταν ᾖ πλέως,
ἄρας ἐπάταξα.

Dem. There's no brains under that long hair
of yours, if you think me
witless; this imbecility
of mine is deliberately put on.
For I get personal pleasure
out of my daily feed,
and also I deliberately fatten up
one thief of a political leader;
and when he is full up,
I raise my hand and strike him down.

The chorus—the same chorus who moments ago was championing the shamelessness of the Sausage Seller—is impressed with Demos' shrewdness (1131–1140), and Demos rounds out the song with boasts of his *sophia* and assurances that he always forces his thieving flatterers to "disgorge whatever they have stolen from me" (1148–1149). Critics have never been especially happy with this passage, since it disrupts the dramatic flow and muddles the political perspective of the play. Demos has now become a sophisticated and omniscient figure who claims only to have been *acting* the part of the fool; so does it matter whether there are any differences between Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller, if Demos knows them both to be the demagogic scoundrels that they

are?[40] Demos makes it clear that neither one would serve him any better than the other, and as such the satire of the play seems even more generalized than when it began. Moreover, Demos' revelation serves to comment on the very nature of the satire that had preceded the scene, in that it posits a knowing intelligence (Demos) that sits above the action of the play as it progresses, observing it much as an audience would. The premise of the song is that Demos remains always unchanged, morally aware, and observant of his surroundings. He takes this moment in the play to let the audience in on his omniscience, and he thus urges them to rethink the action that has preceded in this light. This amounts, it seems, to a metatheatrical critique of the play's satire: we can all (the audience, Demos himself) enjoy the wild behavior of Paphlagon and the Sausage Seller, cheering them on as they trade insults and compete for the crown of roguery, but it makes no real difference because the person they are trying to dupe, Demos, is already on to their tricks. With this scene, then, the author and his character Demos collude with the alert audience to assert their understanding that for those who know, comic satire is fundamentally innocuous.

What are we to make of the fact, however, that, as far as the plot is concerned, the song between Demos and the chorus seems to be forgotten as soon as it is over? The last three hundred lines of the play pick up the action as if Demos were as clueless as always, and the plot follows a predictable pattern where the villain—here, Paphlagon—is dethroned and harmony restored. From a logical point of view, the ending of the play is inconsistent and absurd: the Sausage Seller returns with Paphlagon

[40] See the discussions in Landfester (1967, 83–104), Brock (1986), Reinders (1995), and N.W. Slater (2002, 79–85). See also S.D. Olson (1990c). Demos' sudden revelation can be taken in several ways: either we read it as a desperate, last-minute attempt to defend himself against the chorus' accusations that he is a gullible dupe, or we take it at face value and see in it (in the words of N.W. Slater [2002, 79]) a "rudimentary political theory" in which the demos deliberately "fattens up" the politicians in order draw upon their resources later on when it has a need. I suspect that we should take Demos' revelation more or less "straight"—he seems to function analogously to the chorus of clouds in *Clouds*, who pretend to support the unscrupulous ways of Strepsiades and the Weaker Logos, but end up repudiating and avenging them instead. Demos' transformation in *Knights* is as sudden as the cloud chorus' in that play, but, as is often noted, the moral trajectory of *Knights* does not prepare us for Demos' revelation as smoothly as *Clouds* prepares us for the chorus' shift in moral stance (see, e.g., Reinders [1995, 17]). The result is that no matter how "sincerely" we take Demos' claim that he was always merely *pretending* to be a fool, there remains room for doubt about how savvy he really could have been earlier in the play; and so, ultimately, he never emerges from the play fully unscathed by Aristophanic satire.

for a final round of flattery; Demos judges the Sausage Seller his true lover, thus fulfilling the oracle; and after an interlude in which the chorus gratuitously mocks several citizens for their scandalous behavior, the Sausage Seller returns a new man, announcing that he has boiled down Demos and restored him to his former vigor as an instantiation of the old values of an Athens from the period of the Persian Wars. Suddenly the Sausage Seller has shed his *poneria* and becomes a sanctimonious political leader. At last (1325) he brings on Demos in all his youthful glory, and the two review just how bad Demos had become before he was boiled down and reconstituted. Demos repeatedly acts incredulous that he could have behaved that way ("was I *that* stupid and senile?" 1349), and he formally apologizes at 1355: "I'm really ashamed of my former errors." Cleon is blamed for deceiving Demos and consigned from then on to "have shouting matches with prostitutes and bathmen" (1403).

In the face of this ending, one could, of course, accuse Aristophanes of sloppy playwriting, as many have done. But it might be more appropriate to read the last third of the play as a highly self-conscious exercise in helping an audience find meaning in a comic play. Once Demos has revealed what he presents as his true self in a private moment with the chorus and audience, there is no going back: the audience will now confront the final scenes of the play with the privileged knowledge that Demos is there behaving disingenuously; he may lament and apologize for his former susceptibility to demagogues, but the audience now knows (or so they are led to believe by Demos) that he is really unaffected by them at the most basic level. Demos is an allegory for the populace of a democratic Athens, the very group for whom the play was first performed, and as such the portrait of Demos on stage mirrors the audience itself. Like the character Demos, the Athenian demos always sits above the mockery, joking, and satire, and it takes pleasure in the fact that there is little it can *learn* from comedy that it does not already know,[41] even if there is plenty to enjoy. This does not mean that the *plot* implies no positions on the topical issues or the personalities it addresses. The satire of Cleon, and of demagoguery in general, is clear enough in *Knights*, but the audience surely did not need to attend the performance

[41] By "learn" I am speaking merely of the various familiar "facts" that the plays reveal—political prosopographies, local gossip, social behavioral norms, and so on. I do not mean to imply that the audience could not take away from a comedy some insight about their world that we might consider a form of "learning." On the didacticism of comedy, see below, note 43.

of a comedy in order to learn about such topics for the first time. It was in the particular poetic *treatment* of these widely known issues[42] that the poet sought to make his mark, rather than in any serious attempt to educate the public.[43]

5. *The "Peace" Plays*

The same methodological problems we encounter when we try to interpret the political satire of *Knights* recur when we consider one of Aristophanes' other favorite themes, the desire for peace during wartime. The

[42] Or, perhaps, as Silk (2000a, 349) succinctly puts it: "If Aristophanes writes [in *Knights*] as a public servant, it is as a servant of the Muses."

[43] The question of Aristophanes' "didacticism" remains a highly controversial topic, which no critic can ever completely ignore, despite the fact that few seem interested in theorizing it (Silk [2000a] is a notable exception; see below). It is certainly true that Aristophanes will often *claim* that his comedies are supposed to instruct his audiences (see, e.g., Taplin [1983]), especially in parabatic moments when the chorus can engage in metatheatrical musing. One of the best examples of this can be found in the parabasis of *Acharnians*, where the chorus refers to Aristophanes' "teachings" at several points (ll. 633–635):

> φησὶν δ' εἶναι πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄξιος ὑμῖν ὁ ποιητής,
> παύσας ὑμᾶς ξενικοῖσι λόγοις μὴ λίαν ἐξαπατᾶσθαι,
> μήδ' ἥδεσθαι θωπευομένους, μηδ' εἶναι χαυνοπολίτας.
>
> The poet says that he deserves lots of good things from you because he stopped you from being too easily deceived by novel language [or speeches of foreigners?], from taking pleasure in flatterers, and from being doltish citizens.

or, at the end of the parabasis (ll. 655–658):

> ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς τοι μή ποτ' ἀφῆσθ'· ὡς κωμῳδήσει τὰ δίκαια·
> φησὶν δ' ὑμᾶς πολλὰ διδάξειν ἀγάθ', ὥστ' εὐδαίμονας εἶναι.
> … τὰ βέλτιστα διδάσκων.
>
> But you should never let him [Aristophanes] go; since his comedy will always be about what is right. He says that he'll teach you many good things, so as to make you happy … teaching you the best things.

As S.D. Olson (2002, 236) notes on *Acharnians* 628–629, however, inadvertently (since he is not himself concerned with the truth claims of the parabasis) summing up the problem: "Aristophanic parabases frequently contain self-serving claims whose patent falsity is part of the humour." As we have seen earlier, all satirical writing routinely relies upon a stance of self-righteousness, which in turn implies a didactic mode, and it is nearly impossible to sort out in a work of this sort precisely how poetics and genre interact with authorial intention and "seriousness." Sommerstein (2004) offers one methodological road map, applied to the historicity of the quarrel between Aristophanes and Cleon. See the intelligent discussion in Silk (2000a, 301–349) of the problem of "seriousness" in Aristophanes as a general interpretive dilemma.

political and social climate during war is always complex, and the details of a war, at least in a democracy, tend to be matters of public controversy. However, if given the option of war or peace, few would not in principle choose peace. Some people might choose peace at any price, while others might prefer war to a peace that compromised one's principles, but it seems safe to say that no normal person actively *likes* war. When Aristophanes composed his plays specifically on themes of peace for a war-weary Athens, therefore, one can imagine that the topic would be universally popular; and, indeed, purely on the level of fantasy, no doubt they were. But Aristophanic comedy had a way of intermingling wish-fulfillment fantasies ("let's imagine what it would be like to have peace restored") with the gritty realities of day-to-day attitudes ("how can we ever forgive those damned Spartans …") that must have made for an especially charged and topical production.

With the peace plays, then, we find ourselves once again wondering how we should evaluate the plotlines and the attitudes of characters on the stage: Can we conclude that the poet himself is taking definitive stances on crucial political issues? Was he offering the Athenian public serious advice on war policy that he hoped they would follow? Such questions have occupied scholars for a long time, and our fundamental inability to answer them definitively will ensure that they will never be put to rest entirely. As we saw in the case of *Knights*, the tension between the deliberate obtrusiveness of the comic poet's "voice" and the many generic elements that precede, so to speak, the details of a specific plot, account for this perennial instability of comic meaning. The peace plays, in their turn, negotiate these tensions idiosyncratically, thus presenting their own set of interpretive challenges, to which we now turn.

The three plays generally classified as "peace plays" are *Acharnians* (performed in 425, and Aristophanes' first production under his own name), *Peace* (421), and *Lysistrata* (411). Allusions to the Peloponnesian War pervade all of Aristophanes' fifth-century plays, but the plots of these three in particular are directly concerned with methods of ending the war and securing peace. In this regard, the general thrust of each is similar: one character, exasperated by the misery of war, takes it upon himself (or herself) to devise a plan to restore peace. In *Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis attempts to convince the Athenians to make peace with Sparta, but, failing in this, pursues instead a private treaty with the enemy. *Peace* has a character, Trygaeus, fly up to Olympus on a huge dung beetle in order to speak directly to Zeus about restoring the Goddess Peace on earth, only

to be told by Hermes that she must be rescued from a deep pit into which War has cast her. Naturally, the rest of the play dramatizes the hauling up of the goddess and the eventual restoration of peace and fecundity on earth. Ten years later, the war was still dragging on, and a new peace plot seemed to call for even more-drastic measures. In *Lysistrata*, perhaps Aristophanes' most popular play among modern audiences, the character Lysistrata leads women from all over Greece in a sex strike against their husbands in order to force them to end the war.

Such bald summaries can hardly convey the variety and intricacy of these plays. Each can easily be studied for other characteristically Aristophanic elements that have nothing to do with war and peace per se, such as the deployment of tragic parody (in *Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis impersonates the Euripidean character Telephus in order to add pathos to his appeal to the assembled Acharnians; in *Peace*, Trygaeus' ascent to heaven is cast as a parody of Euripides' *Bellerophon*), or the use of women as protagonists (Lysistrata emerges as the real hero of that play). I will limit my discussion in this section, however, to the specific type of interpretive problems that this kind of a plot presents. To this end, I will concentrate on one exemplary passage that brings us face to face with the question of how (or whether) we can distinguish "serious" from "comic," and "historical" from "fictional," in the plays of Aristophanes.

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the speech by Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians* in which he alludes to a quarrel between Aristophanes and Cleon. This allusion is in fact only a minor point made at the beginning of a long disquisition by Dicaeopolis to the men of Acharnae defending his desire to seek peace with the Spartans and offering his own version of the causes of the war. Of all the speeches in Aristophanes, this is the one that critics most readily consider autobiographical. Arguments have been made that Dicaeopolis is an allegorical figure who conveys indirectly the poet's sound political advice, or even that the character was a cipher for the poet himself who took the part himself on the stage.[44] Such ideas derive largely from the apparently sober introduction to the speech, where Dicaeopolis seems to be saying that the discourse he is about to engage in is not the same old comic material, but somehow more serious:

[44] See above, note 12.

Δι. μή μοι φθονήσητ', ἄνδρες οἱ θεώμενοι,
εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀθηναίοις λέγειν
μέλλω περὶ τῆς πόλεως, τρυγῳδίαν ποιῶν.
τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγῳδία.
ἐγὼ δὲ λέξω δεινὰ μέν, δίκαια δέ.
οὐ γάρ με νῦν γε διαβαλεῖ Κλέων ὅτι
ξένων παρόντων τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω.
αὐτοὶ γάρ ἐσμεν οὔπι Ληναίῳ τ' ἀγών,
κοὔπω ξένοι πάρεισιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι
ἥκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι·
ἀλλ' ἐσμὲν αὐτοὶ νῦν γε περιεπτισμένοι·
{τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχυρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω.}

Di. Be not indignant with me, members of the audience, if, though a beggar, I speak before the Athenians about public affairs in a comedy. Even comedy is acquainted with justice; and what I have to say will be shocking, but it will be right. This time Cleon will not allege that I am slandering the city in the presence of foreigners; for we are by ourselves and it's the Lenaean competition, and there are no foreigners here yet; neither tribute money nor troops have arrived from the allied cities. This time we are alone, ready hulled; for I reckon the immigrants as the civic bran.

MacDowell (1995, 58) summarizes this opening as many have read it:

> Here Dicaeopolis states very clearly that this speech is going to be different from most comic speeches. He is going to criticize Athens, and his criticisms, though they may arouse resentment, will be justified … However frivolous comedy may be, there are some occasions when it says something serious and true, and this speech is going to be one of them.

There can be no doubt that this is the conclusion that the character Dicaeopolis *wants* us to draw, but is this the end of the matter? The problems begin when we consider context and genre: Dicaeopolis at this point is clothed in the rags of the mythical king Telephus, a costume he had borrowed from Euripides for his performance.[45] This may not mean in itself that his speech cannot be taken seriously, but one needs to keep in mind what frame of mind any audience would be in at the moment Dicaeopolis begins his monologue. The speech would surely have been delivered in mock tragic style, as would befit the character he has assumed for the purpose. Much will depend on how this scene was played—a question we can never answer for its original production—but the tension between a speaker about to embark upon a clearly paratragic

[45] There is a large bibliography on Dicaeopolis' impersonation of Telephus in *Acharnians*; see S.D. Olson (2002, liv–lxi and passim) for discussion and further bibliography; also N.W. Slater (2002, 57–61).

speech, and his insistence that, despite appearances, he really *should* be taken seriously, offers plenty of comic potential. Insofar as comic poets, especially satirists, are always fond of claiming that they have something serious to say, whenever they go out of their way to insist all the more emphatically that they are serious, it is easy to draw the opposite conclusion ("no really, no really … this time I really mean it …!").

The rest of the speech has muddied the waters still more, since Dicaeopolis brings up documented historical issues about the origins of the war, and he takes the apparently controversial position that the Spartans are not entirely to blame for it:

ἐγὼ δὲ μισῶ μὲν Λακεδαιμονίους σφόδρα,
καὐτοῖς ὁ Ποσειδῶν, οὑπὶ Ταινάρῳ θεός,
σείσας ἅπασιν ἐμβάλοι τὰς οἰκίας·
κἀμοὶ γάρ ἐστιν ἀμπέλια κεκομμένα.
ἀτάρ, φίλοι γὰρ οἱ παρόντες ἐν λόγῳ,
τί ταῦτα τοὺς Λάκωνας αἰτιώμεθα;
ἡμῶν γὰρ ἄνδρες, κοὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν λέγω,
μέμνησθε τοῦθ', ὅτι οὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν λέγω,
ἀλλ' ἀνδράρια μοχθηρά, παρακεκομμένα,
ἄτιμα καὶ παράσημα καὶ παράξενα,
ἐσυκοφάντει Μεγαρέων τὰ χλανίσκια·
κεἴ που σίκυον ἴδοιεν ἢ λαγῴδιον
ἢ χοιρίδιον ἢ σκόροδον ἢ χόνδρους ἅλας,
ταῦτ' ἦν Μεγαρικὰ κἀπέρατ' αὐθημερόν.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ σμικρὰ κἀπιχώρια,
πόρνην δὲ Σιμαίθαν ἰόντες Μεγαράδε
νεανίαι 'κκλεπτουσι μεθυσοκότταβοι·
κᾖθ' οἱ Μεγαρῆς ὀδύναις πεφυσιγγωμένοι
ἀντεξέκλεψαν Ἀσπασίας πόρνα δύο·
κἀντεῦθεν ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου κατερράγη
Ἕλλησι πᾶσιν ἐκ τριῶν λαικαστριῶν.
ἐντεῦθεν ὀργῇ Περικλέης οὐλύμπιος
ἤστραπτ', ἐβρόντα, ξυνεκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα,
ἐτίθει νόμους ὥσπερ σκόλια γεγραμμένους,
ὡς χρὴ Μεγαρέας μήτε γῇ μήτ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ
μήτ' ἐν θαλάττῃ μήτ' ἐν ἠπείρῳ μένειν.
ἐντεῦθεν οἱ Μεγαρῆς, ὅτε δὴ 'πείνων βάδην,
Λακεδαιμονίων ἐδέοντο τὸ ψήφισμ' ὅπως
μεταστραφείη τὸ διὰ τὰς λαικαστρίας·
οὐκ ἠθέλομεν δ' ἡμεῖς δεομένων πολλάκις.
κἀντεῦθεν ἤδη πάταγος ἦν τῶν ἀσπίδων.

Now I hate the Spartans intensely, and I hope Poseidon and the god of Taenarum send them another earthquake and brings all their houses down on them. I too have had vines cut down. But look—for there are only

> friends here listening—why do we blame it all on the Laconians? For it was men of ours—I do not say the city; remember that, I do not say the city—but some bent, ill-struck pieces of humanity, worthless counterfeit foreign stuff, who began denouncing the Megarians' little woollen cloaks, and if they saw anywhere a cucumber or a young hare, or a piglet, or some garlic or lump-salt, it was declared Megarian and sold up the same day. Now that, to be sure, was trivial and purely local; but then some cottabus-playing young rakes went to Megara and stole a whore called Simaetha. After that the Megarians, garlic-stung by the smart, stole two whores of Aspasia's in retaliation. And from that broke forth the origin of the war upon all the Greeks: from three prostitutes. Then in his wrath Olympian Pericles lightened and thundered and threw Greece into turmoil, making laws worded like drinking songs, "that no Megarian should remain on land or in Agora, or on sea or on shore." After that, when they were starving by inches, the Megarians asked the Spartans to procure a reversal of the decree caused by the prostitute affair; but we refused, though they asked repeatedly. And after that it was clashing of shields.

Scholars have long debated how best to read this passage, with its peculiar mix of parody, comic exaggeration, and solid historical grounding. There is no question, for example, that Dicaeopolis regards the so-called Megarian decree, outlawing Athenian trade with Megara, as the root cause of the war, but the subsequent story of the stolen prostitutes, even if it alludes obliquely to real events,[46] seems to undermine the sobriety of everything that preceded it. Some would dismiss, therefore, the entire passage as absurd, while others take it seriously precisely because it correlates so well to events in Athenian history. The problem, however, is that even if we can distinguish the fictions from the facts, the poet's intentions are still elusive, and they must remain so in order to prevent the comedy from sinking into mere preaching, unleavened by the humor of incongruity and absurdity. Furthermore, we should consider what it really means to say that Dicaeopolis' speech (or any other character's, for that matter) is serious. Does this imply that the poet (assuming for the moment that Dicaeopolis spoke on his behalf) believed he had something important to say for the good of society and that he would be able to persuade the audience to see things his way? What *exactly* would the comic poet hope to teach his audience? In Dicaeopolis' speech, the obvious send-up of the causes of the war assumes that the material was basically familiar to the audience from the start, including the question of how blameworthy the Spartans were for initiating hostilities. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the serious topics of the day addressed in

[46] For discussion see S.D. Olson (2002, 209–211, ad loc.).

Dicaeopolis' speech would have surprised anyone, even those who were adamant about continuing the war. For the stance taken by Dicaeopolis is virtually demanded by Aristophanes' choice of an anti-war plot: if a character is created to pursue an agenda of peace, one would expect, first of all, that he take his task seriously and, second, that he articulate his mission in terms familiar to the audience or, alternatively, easily recognizable as fantasy. Aristophanes may or may not have held the personal views about the war articulated by Dicaeopolis, but if he did they were neither intrinsically profound nor novel—and so, in a sense, irrelevant to what he was trying to achieve on the comic stage.

Dicaeopolis' famous speech in *Acharnians* has seemed to many to be more heartfelt and poignant than most others in Aristophanes, but in the later peace play, *Peace*, we find a strikingly similar passage about the origins of the war, this time in the mouth of the god Hermes. This speech, lines 604–648 (with interruptions from others), has often been compared to Dicaeopolis', but because Hermes has not been connected directly with Aristophanes in the way Dicaeopolis has, the passage in *Peace* has caused less of a stir. Nevertheless, the two speeches seem to function analogously as conventional set pieces within peace plays, a fact that also would rub away some of the autobiographical patina of Dicaeopolis' speech. Like Dicaeopolis, Hermes blames the Megarian decree and the behavior of Pericles for the outbreak of the war, but the details and emphases are now different:[47]

πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ †αὐτῆς ἦρξε† Φειδίας πράξας κακῶς.
εἶτα Περικλέης φοβηθεὶς μὴ μετάσχοι τῆς τύχης,
τὰς φύσεις ὑμῶν δεδοικὼς καὶ τὸν αὐτοδὰξ τρόπον,
πρὶν παθεῖν τι δεινὸν αὐτός, ἐξέφλεξε τὴν πόλιν,
ἐμβαλὼν σπινθῆρα μικρὸν Μεγαρικοῦ ψηφίσματος·
κἀξεφύσησεν τοσοῦτον πόλεμον ὥστε τῷ καπνῷ
πάντας Ἕλληνας δακρῦσαι, τούς τ᾽ ἐκεῖ τούς τ᾽ ἐνθάδε.
ὡς δ᾽ ἅπαξ τὸ πρῶτον ἄκουσ᾽ ἐψόφησεν ἄμπελος
καὶ πίθος πληγεὶς ὑπ᾽ ὀργῆς ἀντελάκτισεν πίθῳ,
οὐκέτ᾽ ἦν οὐδεὶς ὁ παύσων, ἥδε δ᾽ ἠφανίζετο.

What started it all in the first place was Pheidias getting into trouble. Then Pericles became frightened he might share Pheidias' fate—for he was afraid of your character and your hard-biting temper—and before anything terrible could happen to *him*, he set the city ablaze by dropping into it a tiny spark of a Megarian decree: and he fanned up so great a war that all the Greeks were in tears with the smoke, both those over there

[47] See Cassio (1985, 87–103), MacDowell (1995, 186–192), S.D. Olson (1998, 196).

> and those over here; and as soon as the first vine had reluctantly begun to crackle, and the first wine-jar received a knock and kicked out in vengeful anger at another jar, there was no longer anyone who could put a stop to it, and peace was disappearing.

This time, Pericles is imagined to have deliberately used the Megarian decree to divert the attention of a skeptical populace. Both Pericles and the Athenians are here criticized in a manner that is crafted to seem genuine enough, but the use of history is once again comically distorted. Here Hermes claims that there was a connection between the conviction of the sculptor Pheidias for embezzlement and Pericles' support of the Megarian decree, even though the events were probably five years apart.[48] Scholars have probed the historical background to these claims, as well as those in the remainder of Hermes' speech, and generally conclude that, while many aspects seem absurd, just as many seem accurate. Either way, however, they are ultimately generated by the specific poetic needs of a peace play, which include, among other things, a critical stance towards the war at hand and the policies behind it, and a Utopian, almost childlike, desire for the restoration of order and harmony.

6. *Anything but the Present: Imagining Utopias in Past and Future Time*

The desire for peace during wartime almost always implies a desire to return to a past condition. In a sense, as we noted earlier, virtually all the plays of Aristophanes express in one way or another a dissatisfaction with current conditions, and most attempt at least to consider alternatives to the status quo. Aristophanes seems to have oscillated between two plot types in satirizing the present and conjuring a better world for his audience: if the present time was odious, one could go either backwards to a golden age of the past or forwards to a conjectural utopian world. In either case, the goal is essentially the same, for past golden ages are typically utopian; if the present is regarded as a time of imbalance, then a future utopia seeks to recalibrate the world, whether morally or socially, so as to restore a balance that would have existed in some mythical past. Future and past worlds eventually meet, unified by the simple fact that they are not the tainted present.

[48] See MacDowell (1995, 187).

Several of the plays are explicitly utopian, that is, their plots revolve around the attempts to escape from the present by imagining, and then creating on the stage, a fantastic, ideal world. *Birds* (414), for example, dramatizes the attempts of two Athenians, Peisetairos and Euelpides, to found a new city between gods and men, called "Cloudcuckooland," in order to flee what they regard to be the oppression of Athenian life. *Ecclesiazusae* (392) and *Plutus*, despite obvious differences in character and style, also move in this direction. In *Ecclesiazusae*, Athenian women take political control and establish a communistic form of government, while *Plutus* imagines a world in which the god Wealth, traditionally blind, has his sight restored and can suddenly apportion wealth only to those who conspicuously deserve it. In all three plays, plenty of comedy arises when the (often negative) implications of each imaginary world are played out: for example, the greater part of *Birds* shows how the regime would handle the obnoxious characters of Athens; in the communistic state of *Ecclesiazusae*, men must pay equal sexual attention to unattractive women; and in *Plutus*, Hermes is reduced to beggary because the rich no longer offer him sacrifice. Despite the usually comical downsides to utopia, however, the plays end timelessly fixed in the fantasy world they have constructed.

Some of Aristophanes' best-known plays, by contrast, presume an ideal world that has already existed and ought to be recovered as an antidote to the present. *Clouds* (423/rev. extant version, c. 418?), *Wasps* (422), and *Frogs* (405) all turn on the question of whether current particular cultural practices are better or worse than the way they were in a previous generation. *Clouds* stages an *agon*, or debate, between two figures allegorically representing old and new systems of education and rhetoric, and the moral positioning could not be any clearer: the character named "Stronger Logos" represents the education of earlier generations, when standards of behavior were clear and moral values unquestioned, while "Weaker Logos" speaks for the current system, with its discourse of moral relativism and constant questioning of the old values. The plot itself tells the story of what happens when a semi-educated person, Strepsiades, looks to the "new education" (as championed in the play by Socrates and his cohort of sophists) to learn how to get away with unethical behavior (specifically, not paying his debts).

Wasps has a completely different sort of plot, but the cultural tension that emerges is a variation on the same theme.[49] Here, a son, Bdelycleon

[49] See Zimmermann (2006a, 2006b).

(Cleon Hater), tries to cure his old father, Philocleon (Cleon Lover), of his obsession with sitting on juries, and in the course of the play, two sorts of lives are envisioned. The one, embodied by Philocleon, reflects the contemporary Athenian ethos, often caricatured in comedy, where lawsuits abound and jurors have no interest in the moral substance of any of the cases. Bdelycleon does effect a cure of his father and tries to turn him into a respectable aristocratic citizen holding to traditional values, but the results are supremely comical. Philocleon proves too much of a free spirit to play the sophisticated socialite, and he promptly offends a succession of people after getting hopelessly drunk at a party. Like Strepsiades in *Clouds*, Philocleon seems bumblingly incapable of fully understanding either old or new value systems, but each serves within his respective plot to foreground what must have been well-known public debates.

The "culture wars" of *Clouds* and *Wasps* are not unlike those witnessed in our own time over the past several decades in the West, where epithets such as "essentialist" and "relativist" now stand in for such characters as Stronger and Weaker Logos. As in our own culture wars, one of the flashpoints for this ongoing controversy at Athens was the literary canon. Then, as now, creative artists were generally assumed to have influence over their audiences, whether by subtly inculcating values or by directly affecting actual behavior. Just as our own society seems perennially anxious about the effect of the certain forms of art on culture, so also did the Athenians worry that artistic representation might not always be innocuous. Aristophanes composed two plays explicitly concerned with poetic aesthetics, *Thesmophoriazusae* (Women at the Festival; 411) and *Frogs*, both of which dramatize a polarity between two types of poetry, an older style represented by Aeschylus, and a newer one represented by Euripides. Aristophanes treated each of these poets, whether legitimately or not, as the flag bearer for a vast array of opposing political and social issues, and each was easily assimilated to one side or other of the debate. Aeschylus in *Frogs* became the great champion of a bygone era of traditional Athenian virtue, the generation of Marathon fighters, as he repeatedly reminds us, and Euripides both here and in *Thesmophoriazusae* represented whatever was felt to be new and degenerate—an avant-garde poetics, anti-aristocratic politics, and a sophistic, relativistic philosophical bent. Indeed, Aristophanes lavished such care on his portrayal of Euripides that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish mockery from admiration.[50] His brilliant parodies of Euripidean tragedy through-

[50] Opinions vary about the significance of Aristophanes' engagement with Euripides

out *Frogs* and *Thesmophoriazusae* display a keen sensitivity to its stylistic and philosophical nuances that often overshadows the polemical premise of the plot. Still, whatever Aristophanes personally felt about the targets he turned into scapegoats for various cultural ills, the dividing line between old (better) and new (worse) is consistently inscribed.

With these plays too, however, we face a familiar problem: is the poet promoting a conservative, retrograde agenda? Certainly, a cursory glance at the course of these plots might leave us with that impression. *Clouds* ends with Socrates' *phrontisterion* ("Thinkery") set on fire; in *Frogs*, although Dionysus had gone to the Underworld to fetch Euripides as the savior of Athens, he ends up abandoning him in favor of Aeschylus. *Thesmophoriazusae* ends with Euripides promising the Athenian women that he will henceforth refrain from slandering them in his plays. Does Aristophanes hope to persuade his audience, for example, that all sophistic teaching was an unmitigated evil, or that Euripidean tragedy would spell the ruin of Athens? How seriously should we take the outcome of the final scene in *Frogs*, where Euripides and Aeschylus each offer a plan for the salvation of Athens? A vast bibliography exists for questions such as these, and we cannot begin to settle them individually in this context. But as part of our ongoing concern in this chapter with strategies for interpreting Aristophanic comedy, it will be useful to examine some of the ways in which the theme of the Old and New is articulated across the plays. It will become clear quickly enough that Aristophanes could adopt a multiplicity of stances towards this theme, depending on the needs of the plot at any given moment.

Within the confines of its own fictional world, each play pretends that the audience will hear a consistent message from its author, but once one steps outside this world—whether as an educated Athenian steeped in the annual fare of comic productions or as an informed reader of later periods—the structural underpinnings of this pretense become everywhere apparent, and the usual interpretive problems return. Are Socrates and Euripides chosen as targets, for example, simply because they are, as we might say, marketable as comic commodities, or because Aristophanes found them genuinely ridiculous? In short, how much of Aristophanes' treatment of them can we ascribe to the demands of the genre, how much to didactic intention? By focusing below on several key scenes in *Clouds* and *Frogs*, such questions emerge in high relief.

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throughout his comedies. Some recent discussion in Hubbard (1991, 214–219), Silk (2000a, 48–52), and Rosen (2004; 2005; 2006a; 2006b).

The *agon* between Stronger and Weaker Logos in *Clouds* functions as a showpiece for Strepsiades' son, Pheidippides—and for the audience—of the two forms of education available to him. At 961, Stronger Logos enters and self-righteously declares his position (961–965):

Κρ. λέξω τοίνυν τὴν ἀρχαίαν παιδείαν ὡς διέκειτο,
ὅτ' ἐγὼ τὰ δίκαια λέγων ἤνθουν καὶ σωφροσύνη 'νενόμιστο.
πρῶτον μὲν ἔδει παιδὸς φωνὴν γρύξαντος μηδέν' ἀκοῦσαι·
εἶτα βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς εὐτάκτως εἰς κιθαριστοῦ
τοὺς κωμήτας γυμνοὺς ἁθρόους, κεἰ κριμνώδη κατανείφοι. 965

Str. Very well, I will describe how the old education was managed, in the days when I and my just cause flourished and it was the done thing to be decent. First of all, it was the rule that not a sound should be heard from a boy, not a grunt; then, the boys of the neighborhood had to walk through the streets to the music-master's together and in good order, and without cloaks, even if it was snowing as thick as barley groats.

The passage is replete with code words and phrases that affiliate Stronger Logos with the old ways: "old education" (ἀρχαία παιδεία), "just cause" (τὰ δίκαια), "decent" (σωφροσύνη), "in good order" (εὐτάκτως). He continues in this vein, concentrating on how well behaved boys used to be when his educational system held sway. But towards the end of this speech, Stronger Logos' own rhetoric gets the better of him, as he becomes fixated on the genitalia of these same boys:

ἠλείψατο δ' ἂν τοὐμφαλοῦ οὐδεὶς παῖς ὑπένερθεν τότ' ἄν, ὥστε 977
τοῖς αἰδοίοισι δρόσος καὶ χνοῦς ὥσπερ μήλοισιν ἐπήνθει·

In those days, too, no boy would anoint himself below the navel, and so on their private parts there was a coat of dewy down like on quinces …

It is often pointed out[51] that this passage undercuts some of the seriousness in the speech and sets the tone for the rest of the *agon*, which relies far more on comic strategies (jokes, hyperbole, paratragedy) than on reasoned argument. Stronger Logos sums up his, and his opponent's, position at 1009–1023:

ἢν ταῦτα ποιῇς ἁγὼ φράζω,
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις προσέχῃς τὸν νοῦν, 1010
ἕξεις αἰεὶ
στῆθος λιπαρόν, χροιὰν λαμπράν,
ὤμους μεγάλους, γλῶτταν βαιάν,
πυγὴν μεγάλην, πόσθην μικράν.
ἢν δ' ἅπερ οἱ νῦν ἐπιτηδεύῃς, 1015

[51] E.g., Dover (1968b, 216, ad 977).

πρῶτα μὲν ἕξεις
χροιὰν ὠχράν, ὤμους μικρούς,
στῆθος λεπτόν, γλῶτταν μεγάλην,
πυγὴν μικράν, [κωλῆν μεγάλην,] ψήφισμα μακρόν·
καί σ' ἀναπείσει τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν ἅπαν
καλὸν ἡγεῖσθαι, τὸ καλὸν δ' αἰσχρόν·
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τῆς Ἀντιμάχου
καταπυγοσύνης ἀναπλήσει.

If you do these things I tell you, and bend your efforts to them, you will always have a shining breast, a bright skin, big shoulders, a minute tongue, a big rump and a small prick. But if you follow the practices of the youth of today, for a start you'll have a pale skin, small shoulders, a skinny chest, a big tongue, a small rump, [a big ham] and a long … winded decree; and he [the Weaker Logos] will talk you into believing whatever is foul to be fair, and whatever is fair foul; and on top of that he will infect you with the faggotry of Antimachus.

It is noteworthy that Stronger Logos' obsession in these lines with the shape and size of the body parts that characterize followers of each side is thoroughly comic, and even in the last few lines when he introduces what sounds like a serious complaint against Weaker Logos (that he teaches people to distort traditional moral values), he concludes with an obscene flourish about how such behavior will turn its practitioners into passive homosexuals. Weaker Logos takes his turn at 1036 ff. and, with a series of comically absurd parodies of sophistic argumentation, manages to persuade Stronger Logos to abandon his cause and defect to his side (1102–1104).

Κρ. ἡττήμεθ'· ὦ κινούμενοι,
πρὸς τῶν θεῶν δέξασθέ μου
θοἰμάτιον, ὡς
ἐξαυτομολῶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

We are defeated. Here, you buggers, please for heaven's sake take my cloak; I'm deserting to your camp!

The end of the *agon* is fast paced, boisterous, and funny, but in fact, from a logical standpoint, it contradicts the direction of the plot as a whole. The old traditional values represented by Stronger Logos are actually vindicated in the end: the chorus of clouds, originally patron deities of Socrates and his school, suddenly reveal themselves as vengeful paragons of the old ways and chastise Strepsiades for his behavior. In response, Strepsiades begs forgiveness (1476–1480) and proceeds to set Socrates' school on fire. Does this ending help us to understand the meaning of the play? Does the audience leave the theater thinking that it has just sat

through a morality play calling for the reversion to the proverbial days of yore when citizens behaved, even if unreflectively, according to well-delineated norms? These questions can be answered, it seems, in several ways. On the one hand, it is easy to see the play as purveying a simple object lesson about unethical behavior. The chorus plainly claim as much at 1458–1461:

Χο. ἡμεῖς ποιοῦμεν ταῦθ' ἑκάστοθ', ὅντιν' ἂν
γνῶμεν πονηρῶν ὄντ' ἐραστὴν πραγμάτων,
ἕως ἂν αὐτὸν ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς κακόν,
ὅπως ἂν εἰδῇ τοὺς θεοὺς δεδοικέναι.

This is what we always do on every occasion, whenever we find a man to be a lover of what is evil, until we cast him into misery, that he may learn to fear the gods.

But how do we reconcile this approach, on the other hand, with the many inconsistencies that seem to fly in the face of a consistent moral message? We have already seen that neither Stronger nor Weaker Logos was very convincing in the *agon*, arguing that each side could be easily ridiculed even from within. Add to this the fact that Strepsiades is portrayed as a typically contradictory comic character—by turns appealingly ingenuous, cagey, buffoonish, unscrupulous, narcissistic, and so on. Socrates, for his part, cannot be read by either ancient or modern audiences without the specter of the historical figure Socrates in the background, and this complicates matters even further. For the portrait of the philosopher in the play is so distorted from reality (or at least the reality that we have become accustomed to from Plato) that it becomes easier to sympathize with him than to endorse Strepsiades' vindictive and decidedly unphilosophical behavior. If the poet and audience had even the slightest acquaintance with the real Socrates, it is not difficult to see, as some have, the Socrates of *Clouds* as essentially a victim of an individual doomed never to understand true philosophical discourse.[52] In the end, it becomes impossible to ascribe any clear stand to Aristophanes on the relative merits of the "old" and "new" education, despite the fact that he has done a fine job satirizing the funniest aspects of each. When we analyze an Aristophanic play, therefore, we must learn to decouple the term "serious" from our craving to know what the poet actually believed. *Clouds* is certainly "serious," as the best comedy in any age usually is, in

[52] See Nussbaum's (1980) foundational article on this subject, with broader discussion and further bibliography in Hubbard (1991, 88–112), and O'Regan (1992, 80–88 and passim).

that it reflects with remarkable accuracy a whole host of issues on the minds of the contemporary audience. Anyone might readily conclude from *Clouds* that Aristophanes favored a basically conservative educational system and a rhetorical style that put some value in truth; but such a bland formulation hardly does justice to the play's very different sort of reality, where consistency and logic cede to the incongruity and contradiction that make people laugh and, one hopes, reflect.

Aristophanes' career demonstrated that, like most highly controversial topics in society, the conflict between old and new modes of thought, style, and so on, is prime material for comedy. Almost twenty years after the first production of *Clouds*, he composed *Frogs*, which bore a striking resemblance to the theme of the earlier play, although oriented now around aesthetic rather than explicitly philosophical issues. A key passage in *Clouds*, in fact, all but heralds the later play and shows the intimate link between their respective plots. Late in the play, after Pheidippides has emerged with his new education from the Socratic school, Strepsiades recounts how they quarreled over dinner about their tastes in poets. The lines are clearly drawn: Aeschylus, Strepsiades' favorite, is now anathema to his son, who now prefers Euripides (1366 ff.):

> "ἐγὼ γὰρ Αἰσχύλον νομίζω πρῶτον ἐν ποιηταῖς–
> ψόφου πλέων, ἀξύστατον, στόμφακα, κρημνοποιόν."
> κἀνταῦθα πῶς οἴεσθέ μου τὴν καρδίαν ὀρεχθεῖν;
> ὅμως δὲ τὸν θυμὸν δακὼν ἔφην· "σὺ δ' ἀλλὰ τούτων
> λέξον τι τῶν νεωτέρων, ἅττ' ἐστὶ τὰ σοφὰ ταῦτα." 1370
> ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ἦκ' Εὐριπίδου ῥῆσίν τιν', ὡς ἐκίνει
> ἀδελφός, ὤλεξίκακε, τὴν ὁμομητρίαν ἀδελφήν.
> κἀγὼ οὐκέτ' ἐξηνεσχόμην, ἀλλ' εὐθέως ἀράττω
> πολλοῖς κακοῖς καἰσχροῖσι· κᾆτ' ἐντεῦθεν, οἷον εἰκός,
> ἔπος πρὸς ἔπος ἠρειδόμεσθ'· εἶθ' οὗτος ἐπαναπηδᾷ, 1375
> κἄπειτ' ἔφλα με κἀσπόδει κἄπνιγε κἀπέτριβεν.[53]
>
> "Oh, yes, I regard Aeschylus as supreme among poets—at being full of noise, incoherent, a bombastic ranter and a creator of mountainous words." And how do you suppose my heart palpitated at that? But I bit back my rage and said, "All right, you recite something from these modern poets, that clever stuff, whatever it is." And he immediately loosed off a speech of Euripides, about how a brother, heaven forfend, was having it off with his sister by the same mother. Well, I could take it no longer, and I immediately piled into him with many hard and foul words; and after that, as you might expect, we attacked each other insult for insult. Then he jumps up; and he knocked me and banged me and choked me and pulverized me.

[53] In line 1371, I read ἦκ' with Sommerstein.

Father and son end up matching word for word in their literary contest, but it quickly degenerates into fisticuffs. By the end of the fifth century, then, it is clear that the tragedies of Aeschylus and Euripides had become emblematic of opposite sides in the ongoing cultural debates of the day. Predictably, Aeschylus represented the old values, nostalgically recalling the glory days of the Athenian Marathon fighters, while Euripides became associated with all that was new, whether in literary style or political and religious attitudes. The play was performed in 405, a time when Athens was weak and demoralized after decades of continual war and political unrest. During the previous year, the Athenians had won an important victory at Arginusae, but suffered enormous losses in battle and in a catastrophic storm that followed. At Athens the hasty inquisition and condemnation of the generals for the disaster caused further domestic pain, and by the time *Frogs* was produced, the controversy was on everyone's mind. It is not surprising, therefore, that the god Dionysus announces at the opening of the play that he intends to retrieve the recently deceased Euripides from the underworld as the savior the city. With this play, we once again encounter the dilemma posed by a plot with a "serious" pretext, but one that is executed in the raucous, free-wheeling style of Aristophanic dramaturgy. Audiences already familiar with Aristophanes' irreverent treatment of Euripides from previous plays (especially *Thesmophoriazusae*) would have a sense of what to expect as soon as Dionysus recounts that he had the idea while reading a text of Euripides' *Andromeda* on a naval expedition (lines 52–54). The desire to find a savior for the city is serious, to be sure, but from the very start of the play, Dionysus' attitude toward Euripides is exposed as either boorish, ironic, or both, as the following exchange with Heracles indicates:

Ηρ. οὔκουν ἕτερ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐνταῦθα μειρακύλλια
τραγῳδίας ποιοῦντα πλεῖν ἢ μύρια,
Εὐριπίδου πλεῖν ἢ σταδίῳ λαλίστερα;?
Δι. ἐπιφυλλίδες ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ στωμύλματα,
χελιδόνων μουσεῖα, λωβηταὶ τέχνης,
ἃ φροῦδα θᾶττον, ἢν ἅπαξ χορὸν λάβῃ,
μόνον προσουρήσαντα τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ.
γόνιμον δὲ ποιητὴν ἂν οὐχ εὕροις ἔτι
ζητῶν ἄν, ὅστις ῥῆμα γενναῖον λάκοι.
Ηρ. πῶς γόνιμον;
Δι. ὧδὶ γόνιμον, ὅστις φθέγξεται
τοιουτονί τι παρακεκινδυνευμένον,
"αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον" ἢ "χρόνου πόδα",

ἢ "φρένα μὲν οὐκ ἐθέλουσαν ὀμόσαι καθ' ἱερῶν,
γλῶτταν δ' ἐπιορκήσασαν ἰδίᾳ τῆς φρενός".
Ηρ. σὲ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀρέσκει
Δι. μᾶλλα πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι.
Ηρ. ἦ μὴν κόβαλά γ' ἐστίν, ὡς καὶ σοὶ δοκεῖ.
Δι. μὴ τὸν ἐμὸν οἴκει νοῦν· ἔχεις γὰρ οἰκίαν. 105
Ηρ. καὶ μὴν ἀτεχνῶς γε παμπόνηρα φαίνεται.

He. Well, aren't there absolutely myriads of other young lads here writing tragedies, whose verbal gush beats Euripides by miles?
Di. Those are left-overs, mere chatterboxes, "quires of swallows," debauchers of their art, who, if they so much as get a chorus, disappear again pretty rapidly after pissing over Tragedy just once. If you looked for a really *potent* poet, one who can give voice to a pedigree phrase, you couldn't find one any more.
He. How do you mean, potent?
Di. Potent in the sense of one that can say daring things like this—"the sky, the dossing-place of Zeus" or "the foot of time," or about a heart that doesn't want to take an oath over sacrificial victims and a tongue that perjures itself separately from the heart.
He. And you *like* that sort of thing?
Di. Like it? I'm absolutely *mad* on it.
He. It's sheer humbug, I tell you—and that's what you think too.
Di. "Let my mind be master in its house"; you've got a house of your own.
He. And what's more, it's plainly, absolutely, utterly rotten stuff.

In the face of this exchange, the audience might find itself asking why a character such as Dionysus, who failed to see the badness of Euripidean tragedy, is charged with finding a savior for Athens.[54] Yet despite Dionysus' consistently buffoonish disposition in the play, he still managed to orchestrate a debate that articulated, however chaotically, the gravest issues of the day. Whether the audience would have a clearer understanding of these issues by the end of the play remains as open a question as it does for all the other plays we have discussed.

During the formal *agon* between the two poets in *Frogs*, the battle lines are drawn similarly to those in *Clouds*. Euripides aims in his plays, he says, to foster rational thinking and reflection, hoping to improve people's lives. This, of course, is the attitude distorted and caricatured in the figure of Socrates and Weaker Logos in the *Clouds*. Aeschylus, by contrast, takes a position akin to that of Stronger Logos, arguing that his poetry reflected the sort of traditional moral and military virtues that the audience ought to emulate. Both poets regard themselves as teachers of the people, and

[54] On the question of Euripides' and Aeschylus' mutual accusations of "badness" in *Frogs*, see Rosen (2008).

both play out a typical contest between the old and new ways—between a past that was moral, stable, and hierarchical, and a present that appeared relativistic and dangerously accessible to all. Two passages from the *agon* sum each position up well:

Ευ. ἔπειτα τουτουσὶ λαλεῖν ἐδίδαξα—
Αι. φημὶ κἀγώ.
ὡς πρὶν διδάξαι γ' ὤφελες μέσος διαρραγῆναι. 955
Ευ. λεπτῶν τε κανόνας εἰσβολῶν ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούς,
νοεῖν, ὁρᾶν, ξυνιέναι, στρέφειν †ἐρᾶν† τεχνάζειν,
κάχ' ὑποτοπεῖσθαι, περινοεῖν ἅπαντα—
Αι. φημὶ κἀγώ.
Ευ. οἰκεῖα πράγματ' εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ', οἷς ξύνεσμεν,
ἐξ ὧν γ' ἂν ἐξηλεγχόμην· ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὗτοι 960
ἤλεγχον ἄν μου τὴν τέχνην· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκομπολάκουν
ἀπὸ τοῦ φρονεῖν ἀποσπάσας, οὐδ' ἐξέπληττον αὐτούς,
Κύκνους ποιῶν καὶ Μέμνονας κωδωνοφαλαροπώλους.
γνώσει δὲ τοῖς τούτου τε κἀμοῖς ἑκατέρου μαθηταῖς.
τουτουμενὶ Φορμίσιος Μεγαίνετός θ' ὁ Μανῆς, 965
σαλπιγγολογχυπηνάδαι, σαρκασμοπιτυοκάμπται,
οὑμοὶ δὲ Κλειτοφῶν τε καὶ Θηραμένης ὁ κομψός.
Δι. Θηραμένης; σοφός γ' ἀνὴρ καὶ δεινὸς εἰς τὰ πάντα,
ὃς ἦν κακοῖς που περιπέσῃ καὶ πλησίον παραστῇ,
πέπτωκεν ἔξω τῶν κακῶν, οὐ Χῖος, ἀλλὰ Κεῖος. 970
Ευ. τοιαῦτα μέντοὐγὼ φρονεῖν
τούτοισιν εἰσηγησάμην,
λογισμὸν ἐνθεὶς τῇ τέχνῃ
καὶ σκέψιν, ὥστ' ἤδη νοεῖν
ἅπαντα καὶ διειδέναι 975
τά τ' ἄλλα καὶ τὰς οἰκίας
οἰκεῖν ἄμεινον ἢ πρὸ τοῦ
κἀνασκοπεῖν, "πῶς τοῦτ' ἔχει;
ποῦ μοι τοδί; τίς τόδ' ἔλαβεν;" (*Frogs* 954–979)

Eu Then I taught these people here [indicating the audience] how to talk -
Aes Indeed you did! I only wish that *before* doing that, you had burst in pieces!
Eu —and how to introduce subtle rules, and how to check that words were rightly angled; perception, vision, comprehension; twisting the hip, contriving schemes, suspecting foul dealing, thinking all round everything
Aes Indeed you did!
Eu —by bringing *everyday* matters on stage, things we're used to, things we're familiar with, things about which I was open to *refutation*, because these people knew all about them and could have exposed any flaws in my art. I didn't distract them from serious thinking with bluster and bombast, nor did I try to terrify them by creating characters like Cycnus and Memnon with bells on the cheek-plates of their horses. You can see by looking at the disciples of both of us, his and mine. His are Phormisius and that dummy

Megaenetus—beard-lance-and-trumpet types, tree-bending flesh-rippers; whereas mine are Cleitophon and that astute fellow Theramenes.

Di Theramenes? A really formidable intellect in every field! If by any chance he falls into trouble or even finds himself close by it—hey presto, he's fallen *out* of trouble again, and instead of a one-spot from Chios he's a six-spot from … Ceos!

Eu *That* is the sort of thinking that I taught these people to do, by putting a rational, critical spirit into my drama. The result is that now they're perceptive about everything, and understand things thoroughly; in particular, they manage their homes better than they used to, always …

Αι. ταῦτα γὰρ ἄνδρας χρὴ ποιητὰς ἀσκεῖν. σκέψαι γὰρ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς 1030
ὡς ὠφέλιμοι τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ γενναῖοι γεγένηνται.
Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετάς θ᾽ ἡμῖν κατέδειξε φόνων τ᾽ ἀπέχεσθαι,
Μουσαῖος δ᾽ ἐξακέσεις τε νόσων καὶ χρησμούς, Ἡσίοδος δὲ
γῆς ἐργασίας, καρπῶν ὥρας, ἀρότους· ὁ δὲ θεῖος Ὅμηρος
ἀπὸ τοῦ τιμὴν καὶ κλέος ἔσχεν πλὴν τοῦδ᾽, ὅτι χρήστ᾽ ἐδίδαξεν, 1035
τάξεις, ἀρετάς, ὁπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν;

Δι. καὶ μὴν οὐ Παντακλέα γε
ἐδίδαξεν ὅμως τὸν σκαιότατον. πρώην γοῦν, ἡνίκ᾽ ἔπεμπεν.
τὸ κράνος πρῶτον περιδησάμενος τὸν λόφον ἤμελλ᾽ ἐπιδήσειν.

Αι. ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλους τοι πολλοὺς ἀγαθούς, ὧν ἦν καὶ Λάμαχος ἥρως·
ὅθεν ἡμὴ φρὴν ἀπομαξαμένη πολλὰς ἀρετὰς ἐποίησεν, 1040
Πατρόκλων, Τεύκρων θυμολεόντων, ἵν᾽ ἐπαίροιμ᾽ ἄνδρα πολίτην
ἀντεκτείνειν αὐτὸν τούτοις, ὁπόταν σά λπιγγος ἀκούσῃ.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας,
οὐδ᾽ οἶδ᾽ οὐδεὶς ἥντιν᾽ ἐρῶσαν πώποτ᾽ ἐποίησα γυναῖκα.

(*Frogs* 1030–1044)

A That's the sort of thing that poets should make a practice of doing. Look at how, from the very beginning, the noblest of poets have conferred benefits on us. Orpheus revealed mystic rites to us and taught us to refrain from killings; Musaeus about oracles and cures for sicknesses; Hesiod about working the land, the seasons for crops, times for ploughing; and the divine Homer, what did he get his honour and renown from if not from the fact that he gave good instruction about the tactics and virtues and arming of soldiers?

D Well, whatever you say, he certainly didn't instruct that clumsy clot Pantacles! The other day, at any rate, when he was in a procession, he was trying to fasten the crest to his helmet *after* first putting the helmet on his head!

A Plenty of other brave men, though, I can tell you; one of them was the heroic Lamachus.—Using that as a model, my art created many portraits of courage—of men like Patroclus or the lion-hearted Teucer—in the hope of inspiring every man in the citizen body to measure up to their standard every time he hears the sound of the trumpet. But by Zeus, I never used to create trollops like Phaedra or Stheneboea; in fact no one can point to any instance, in any of my compositions, of a woman in love.

In the agon of *Clouds*, the audience received nothing but confusing signals from the poet about where its sympathies were supposed to lie.[55] Why, for example, does a character named *Weaker* Logos win the agon? That character may indeed be repudiated in the end, but that fact does not account for the result of the agon. The agon of *Frogs* is similarly beset with mixed messages. At the end of the play, Dionysus, forced to choose between Aeschylus and Euripides (despite the fact that his original intention was to retrieve Euripides), chooses Aeschylus. Does this signal a call to return to all that Aeschylus represented in the agon—the old ways of military vigor and aristocratic virtue? The question of Dionysus' decision has exercised critics for years,[56] but at every turn Aristophanes complicates and compromises any attempts at a satisfactory answer: the agon parodies both poets alike, and neither one emerges any less scathed than the other; a buffoonish character, Dionysus, serves as judge; and at the end, Dionysus admits he likes them both and cannot really decide (1411). How gravely can we take his final decision, then, when in 1433 he laments his inability to decide, and only as an act of desperation thinks up one final litmus test for each. That request—"Just give me one more suggestion each about a way you can see for the City to secure her survival"—generates uncontroversial, or silly, answers from each poet[57] and makes Dionysus' decision no more informed.

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[55] See Rosen (2007, ch. 3) on the ways in which satirical genres tend to play with, and often confound, an audience's sympathies.

[56] Indeed, it is fair to say that Aristophanes sets this up as the central interpretive crux of the play. He has Dionysus, after all, declare at the opening of the play that he intends to retrieve Euripides from the underworld, but at the end of the play he chooses to return with Aeschylus, not Euripides. There is a predictably vast bibliography on the significance of this famous "change of heart." The three recent commentaries on *Frogs* (Del Corno [1985], Dover [1993, esp. 10–37], and Sommerstein [1996]) offer basic discussion of the question; further discussion can be found in (among others) Nethercut (1968), Heiden (1991), Hubbard (1991,199–219), Padilla (1992), von Möllendorff (1995, 173–183), von Möllendorff (1996/1997), Suter (1997), Lada-Richards (1999, 255–278 and passim), and Rosen (2004).

[57] Textual problems have been suspected in this section since antiquity: the Hellenistic scholars Aristarchus and Apollonius (according to the scholia) apparently athetized the replies to Dionysus' question in 1437–1441 and 1452, calling the former "cheap and vulgar" and the latter "irrelevant" to the question posed. Most scholars suspect some form of interpolation resulting from the play's unusual production history (it was reperformed the following year in 404; see below, note 59). Full discussion, with further bibliography and suggestions for reordering certain verses, can be found in Dover (1993, 373–376 ad loc.), and Sommerstein (1996, 286–288).

Despite such obvious ambiguities, however, several other factors, particularly the unusual nature of its chorus and the content of the parabasis, have encouraged a rather somber, serious reading of *Frogs*. Although the play takes its name from a minor chorus of frogs that appears when Dionysus and his slave Xanthias enter the underworld, the real chorus is a processional of Eleusinian mystic initiates. As recent commentators have pointed out, such a chorus, with its emphasis on rebirth and eternal happiness after death, is especially appropriate to a play concerned with the salvation of Athens in bleak times.[58] As soteriological figures, chorus members appear to serve the same function on the cosmic level as the winner of the poetic contest would be expected to serve in the real world of Athens. It is not surprising, therefore, that scholars have generally sensed a strongly didactic flavor to the play's claims (implicit and explicit) to offer not only political, but also spiritual, advice.

The parabasis of *Frogs*, too, with its detailed topical advice for the polis, has nearly always been read as straightforward, unmediated commentary from the poet. Indeed, this interpretive tradition extends back to the Athenians themselves, who evidently admired it so much that they authorized a second production of the play.[59] It is certainly easy to see how the advice offered in the parabasis might have had broad popular appeal in Athens. In the two parts of the parabasis (the epirrhema and antepirrhema), the chorus leader makes three essential points. In lines 686–705, he urges, first, that citizens who remained under suspicion or were disenfranchised for their activity during the oligarchic revolution of 411 be forgiven and regain their rights, and second, that anyone who has fought in the navy, including slaves, become citizens (ll. 686–705):

Χο.: τὸν ἱερὸν χορὸν δίκαιόν ἐστι χρηστὰ τῇ πόλει
ξυμπαραινεῖν καὶ διδάσκειν. πρῶτον οὖν ἡμῖν δοκεῖ
ἐξισῶσαι τοὺς πολίτας κἀφελεῖν τὰ δείματα,
κεἴ τις ἥμαρτε σφαλείς τι Φρυνίχου παλαίσμασιν,
ἐκγενέσθαι φημὶ χρῆναι τοῖς ὀλισθοῦσιν τότε
αἰτίαν ἐκθεῖσι λῦσαι τὰς πρότερον ἁμαρτίας.
εἶτ᾽ ἄτιμόν φημι χρῆναι μηδέν᾽ εἶν᾽ ἐν τῇ πόλει·

[58] E.g., Sommerstein (1996, 18), Bierl (1991, xxx) and Lada-Richards (1999).

[59] Hypothesis III to the play quotes the fourth-century Dicaearchus as saying that the play was restaged as a result of the parabasis, and an ancient biography of Aristophanes (*test.*1.35–39 Kassel-Austin) claims that the parabasis moved the Athenians officially to crown the poet with the sacred olive. How much this story owes merely to Dicaearchus' attempt to explain the fact of a second performance is impossible to tell. Further discussion in MacDowell (1995, 297–300), and Sommerstein (1996, 21).

καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρόν ἐστι τοὺς μὲν ναυμαχήσαντας μίαν
καὶ Πλαταιᾶς εὐθὺς εἶναι κἀντὶ δούλων δεσπότας—
κοὐδὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἔχοιμ ἂν μὴ οὐ καλῶς φάσκειν ἔχειν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπαινῶ· μόνα γὰρ αὐτὰ νοῦν ἔχοντ᾽ ἐδράσατε.
πρὸς δὲ τούτοις εἰκὸς ὑμᾶς, οἳ μεθ ὑμῶν πολλὰ δὴ
χοἱ πατέρες ἐναυμάχησαν καὶ προσήκουσιν γένει,
τὴν μίαν ταύτην παρεῖναι ξυμφορὰν αἰτουμένοις.
ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀργῆς ᾽ανέντες, ὦ σοφώτατοι φύσει,
πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἑκόντες ξυγγενεῖς κτησώμεθα
κἀπιτίμους καὶ πολίτας, ὅστις ἂν ξυνναυμαχῇ.
εἰ δὲ ταῦτ᾽ ὀγκωσόμεσθα κἀποσεμνυνούμεθα,
τὴν πόλιν καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἔχοντες κυμάτων ἐν ἀγκάλαις,
ὑστέρῳ χρόνῳ ποτ᾽ αὖθις εὖ φρονεῖν οὐ δόξομεν.

Chorus: It is right and proper for the sacred chorus to take part in giving good advice and instruction to the community. In the first place, accordingly, we think that all citizens should be made equal and their fears removed; and if someone went wrong at all through being tripped up by the wiles of Phrynichus, I say that those who slipped up at that time should be given the right to clear themselves of any charge and wipe out their previous errors. Secondly, I say that there ought to be no one in the city who is deprived of his rights as a citizen. It is really disgraceful that men who have fought in just one naval battle should straight away be Plataeans and change from slaves into masters—and even that I couldn't in any way say was a bad thing; on the contrary, I congratulate you on it, it's the only sensible thing you've done; but in addition to that it's only fair, when there are men who have fought alongside you, and whose fathers have fought, in a great *many* naval battles, and who are your kith and kin, that you should pardon them this one misfortune when they beg you to. So, you men of innate wisdom, let us tone down our anger, let us readily accept as our kinsmen, and as citizens with full rights, every man who fights in our fleet. If we puff ourselves up about this and are too proud to do it, and that too when our city finds itself "in the arms of the waves," there will come a time hereafter when men will think we were not wise.

Next, he chastises the Athenians for paying more heed to "those men of base metal, aliens, redheads, low fellows of low ancestry" (730–731) than to those "well-born, virtuous, honest, fine, upstanding men, reared in wrestling-schools and choruses and culture" (727–729):

τῶν πολιτῶν θ᾽ οὓς μὲν ἴσμεν εὐγενεῖς καὶ σώφρονας
ἄνδρας ὄντας καὶ δικαίους καὶ καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς
καὶ τραφέντας ἐν παλαίστραις καὶ χοροῖς καὶ μουσικῇ …

Similarly with regard to our citizens: those whom we know to be well-born, virtuous, honest, fine, upstanding men, reared in wrestling schools and choruses and culture …

A great deal has been written about these passages, and most critics agree that they represent a genuine attempt on Aristophanes' part to influence public policy.[60] This is certainly possible, and no one can prove it otherwise. It might be useful, however, to consider how well the parabasis, for all its veneer of topicality and specificity, accords with themes that we have come to associate more broadly with the genre of Old Comedy.

The advice given here strives for a world in which conflict is resolved, good is upheld, and general social equity prevails, even if the audience knows well enough that in reality the problems and conundra brought up here may well remain highly contentious. Most of Aristophanes' plays, in fact, end this way—where people come to know their place, virtue is rewarded, and vice punished—even if it sometimes takes quite a leap in the plot to get there. The very phrasing in parts of the parabasis of *Frogs* sounds more like a dreamy fantasy than the stuff of practical politics: "we think that all citizens should be made equal and their fears removed" (687–688); "I say that there ought to be no one in the city who is deprived of his rights as a citizen" (692); "let us readily accept as our kinsmen, and as citizens with full rights, every man who fights in our fleet" (701–702). Finally, the thrust of the antepirrhema, which urges greater respect for upstanding, honorable citizens, is a message common to nearly all satirists, who thrive on the trope of indignation at the widespread immorality they claim to see around them. This is not to deny that Aristophanes wanted to link this type of comic rhetoric to actual historical realities, nor even that the Athenians might have admired the advice they heard in it, but it does highlight the peculiarly dynamic interaction between literary genre and history so characteristic of comedy.

7. *Conclusions*

No overview such as this can hope to do justice to the diversity and brilliance of Aristophanes. Each play presents the reader (or producer) with its own idiosyncrasies and interpretive challenges, and each will have its own complex relationship not only with Aristophanes' other plays, but also with the work of other contemporary writers. As we have seen in this chapter, however, many questions of interpretation and critical methodology arise across the corpus of plays. Chief among these,

[60] The discussion in MacDowell (1995, 284–288) is representative.

as we have seen, concerns the relationship between the fiction of the play and the occasional intrusion of the poet's own voice. Aristophanes tended to restrict such moments to the parabasis, but even in cases where there was no explicit evidence of a subjective voice in a play, recurrent *ad hominem* satire throughout the plot made it easy for the audience to imagine an author orchestrating his agenda behind the scenes. It is something of a paradox, albeit a fruitful and fascinating one, that the comic poet will act as if he wants the audience to take him at face value in his work, but at the same time make it reasonably clear that he also wants them to probe deeply enough inside the work to uncover its rich poetic edifice. There, of course, is where the bubbling cauldron of comedy resides, where literary genre and authorial temperament collide and collude, where the comic poet dons his masks and sees to it that he remains simultaneously both accessible and elusive.

In the end, therefore, it seems most fruitful to rephrase the traditional question, "how 'seriously' can we take Aristophanes in his plays?" to "what serious issues were on the minds of the Athenian audience to which Aristophanes could apply his literary and dramaturgical skills?" Such a formulation removes our anxiety about authorial consistency on any given topic and transforms Aristophanic comedy (and Old Comedy in general) from a genre that can ultimately offer little more than familiar moral platitudes to one that holds a mirror up to the true complexities and ambiguities of life, then and now. In this sense, Aristophanes is indeed didactic, but it is an indirect didacticism that allows the audience to draw its own lessons from the play.[61]

[61] I thank Stephen Halliwell for his incisive comments on an early draft of this chapter, and Sarah Scullin for editorial assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MIDDLE COMEDY

W. Geoffrey Arnott

1. *The Problem*

Early[1] in 405 BCE, fourteen or fifteen months before the final catastrophe overtook Athens in the Peloponnesian War, Aristophanes produced the *Frogs*. It is the last extant play of Old Comedy proper. Its plot is at times picaresque and discursive, its subject matter is passionately tied to the city in which the play was conceived, and its structure is largely controlled by such traditional and formal Old Comedy elements as the agon and parabasis. The *Frogs* won first prize. In 316 BCE,[2] just eighty-nine years later, Menander in his turn won first prize with the *Dyskolos*. The *Dyskolos* is the only play of New Comedy preserved (virtually) complete. Its plot is tightly knit, its themes and characters are universal, and its structure is largely governed by a new set of formal elements.

Aristophanes' *Frogs* had a chorus of people initiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries, charming the audience of 405 BCE by their nostalgic evocation of the old annual procession from Athens to Eleusis, which had been suspended at the time of the play because of the Spartan occupation of Decelea. This chorus danced and sang between the dialogue scenes a series of specially composed, memorable lyrics that were relevant to the plot, the city, and the period. They and their leader also delivered the parabasis. This lively, functional chorus of Old Comedy is replaced in Menander by a dim shadow: a group of tipsy, young revellers who

[1] A very few fragments of this section are adapted from parts of an earlier paper of mine (1972, 65–80) and reprinted here by kind permission of Oxford University Press.

[2] If we accept V. Martin's emendation ἐπὶ Δημογένους ἄρχοντ(ος) (when Demogenes was archon) for the manuscript's επι διδυμογενους αρχοντ (when Didymogenes was archon), thus replacing a name never attested for Attica with that of the eponymous archon of 317/316 BCE. See especially Sherk (1968, 103).

have virtually no function in the plot,[3] serving merely to entertain the audience in the intervals between the acts with song-and-dance routines whose words are not preserved in our manuscripts and possibly were not even specially composed for the play by its author.

What happened in the period between the *Frogs* and the *Dyskolos*? How did it come about that plays like the *Frogs* went like caterpillars into a chrysalis, to emerge eighty or so years later as the butterflies of New Comedy, so different in form and content? To these questions there is one honest answer: we can guess, but we do not certainly know. We do not know, because out of more than eight hundred plays[4] that were written in the intervening years, only two survive complete in their original Greek—Aristophanes' last extant comedies, *Ecclesiazusae* and *Plutus*—while perhaps two or three more partially survive transmogrified in the Roman adaptations of Plautus.[5] Of the rest, all that we possess is a long series of titles and slightly more than a thousand fragments, virtually all[6] torn from their original contexts by excerptors who mainly wanted to make gastronomic, moralizing, or lexicographical anthologies. Most of these fragments tell us little or nothing about their original dramatic contexts. "How hard it is to get a good idea of a play from a handful of snippets," writes E.W. Handley,[7] "one can test very simply by trying one

[3] See especially the commentaries of Handley (1965) on *Dyskolos* 230–232 and of Gomme and Sandbach (1973) on Dyskolos 230 and 232. The revellers in this chorus, if rightly identified as votaries of the god Pan, have a little more relevance to a play whose action develops in and around a shrine of that god than the choruses in other plays of Menander, where the revellers are merely adventitious visitors to the scene.

[4] Athenaeus (8.336d–f) makes one of the characters in his dining club claim to have read more than eight hundred plays still surviving in his time from the so-called Middle Comedy (on this term see below). Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 68–70) and my commentary on Alexis (1996, 819–822).

[5] The three possible candidates are Plautus' *Amphitruo* (a myth travesty, and its Greek source is thus most likely to have been composed in the first half of the fourth century BC), *Persa* (for a full discussion, see Woytek's edition of the play [1982, 65–79], although this scholar himself favours a later dating), and *Menaechmi* (see Webster [1953, 67–74] along with the reservations expressed in my Alexis commentary [1996, 70–71]; on E. Stärk's view [1989] that this play was not adapted from any Greek source, see especially A.S. Gratwick's edition of *Menaechmi* [1993, 23n27]). Cf. also P.G. McC. Brown in *OCD*[3] (1195) and Benz (2000, 246–249).

[6] One long papyrus fragment, recently discovered and published (the best text now appears in Kassel-Austin VIII as fr. com. adesp. 1146, pp. 473–477), may derive from a play by an unidentified Middle Comedy writer. Its fifty trochaic tetrameters contain dialogue dominated apparently by a cook who rhapsodies about a σίλουρος, a large fish of uncertain identity; subject matter, treatment, and style all suggest Middle Comedy, but both dating and assignment remain uncertain.

[7] (1968, 1).

of Shakespeare's plays in a dictionary of quotations, and perhaps adding a few references to him from a large English grammar for good measure."

2. *Methodology*

If it is so difficult to find out what happened on the comic stage in this transitional period between the end of the fifth century BCE and the last twenty years of the fourth—a period that it has been convenient since Hellenistic times[8] to call "Middle Comedy"—what are we to do, then? Obviously we shall have often to rely on guesswork rather than on proved facts. The guesses, however, must be circumspect, and such little evidence as exists must be pressed only as far as it will safely go. Here we skate on treacherously thin ice. Secondly, we shall attempt to direct our aim at the right targets, which Sir Kenneth Dover has defined with his customary precision: "The attempt to trace, through the fragments of the fourth-century comic poets, the development of elements characteristic of New Comedy constitutes the true study of Middle Comedy."[9]

A further word of caution, however, is needed here. In our way stand some insidious pitfalls that have already trapped a regiment of scholars. The first of these is the food fallacy. Writers who allege that Middle Comedy was obsessed with food—more so than Aristophanes, for example—ignore the fact that many of its extant fragments are preserved in Athenaeus, a writer whose tastes were gastronomic, not dramatic.[10] Athenaeus' bias leaves a distorted impression of the part played by descriptions of food and drink in Middle Comedy. Athenaeus was admittedly able to collect from comedies written in this period a number of long passages, often in anapaestic dimeters, which deal wholly or in part with food and drink—for example, Anaxandrides 42, Antiphanes 27, 216, Ephippus 5, Mnesimachus 4, Sotades 1, Straton 1[11]—but to conclude from such passages that food and drink must have played a predominant role in Middle Comedy both mistakes the part for the whole and ignores the existence of an even longer list of passages that have nothing to do

[8] See especially the full discussion in Nesselrath (1990a, 1–64), arguing persuasively that this label for comic drama produced between Old and New Comedy goes back at least to the second century BC.

[9] In his essay on Greek comedy (1954, 118 = 1968, 145).

[10] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 65), Wilkins (1997, 250–268 and 2000, 38–40), Degani (1998, 215–224).

[11] The papyrus fragment described in n. 6 ought perhaps to be added to this list.

with food. It seems likely in fact that food and drink played no greater and no less a part in the plays of that time than it did—from time to time—in the Old Comedy of Aristophanes: for example, *Acharnians* 872–884 (the Boeotian listing the comestibles he has for sale), 1085–1142 (Dikaiopolis' future feasting contrasted with Lamachos' future hardships), *Knights* 1164–1193 (the competition to feed Demos), *Peace* 999–1015 (a prayer in anapaestic dimeters for a market stocked with things to eat), and *Ecclesiazusae* 834–851 (an invitation to the feast) and 1167–1178 (the food on the table). Aristophanes admittedly varies the presentation of his material, spicing it with nonfood details testifying to his inventive genius, but the Middle Comedy passages cited above also show some admixture of wit (e.g., the wordplay on fish names in Antiphanes 27) and of thematic variety (e.g., the contrast between the feasting of Iphicrates and that of the speaker's master, capped by a bored listener's rebuff, in Anaxandrides 42) introduced in order to retain the audience's attention.

Another pitfall that traps the unwary is the precise identification of Middle Comedy authors. Ancient and Byzantine sources list sixteen poets as belonging to Middle Comedy:[12] Alexis, Amphis, Anaxandrides, Antiphanes, Augeas, Ephippus, Epicrates, Eubulus, Heniochus, Mnesimachus, Nicostratus, Philemon, Sophilus, Sotades, Straton, and Timotheus.[13] However, any such list needs to be treated with caution. The life spans of dramatists do not always fit snugly into dramatic periods. Several dramatists who started writing in the fifth century BCE continued well into the fourth century—not only Aristophanes himself, but also (for example) Plato the comic poet (whose career covered the period from ca. 420 to 391 at least[14]) and Theopompus (whose career extended from ca. 410 to ca. 370[15]). Some poets who appear above in the Middle

[12] See especially Nesselrath (1990a, 58–66).

[13] Oddly they omit Anaxilas, Aristophon, and Dionysius, all of whose careers seem to have been confined to the period of Middle Comedy. On Anaxilas and Aristophon, see section 3; Dionysius comes two places after Aristophon and five below Timocles in the list of Lenaean victors (*IG* ii^2 2325.153 = V C1 col. 4.2 Mette).

[14] Cf. A. Körte in *RE* XX 2 (1950, 2537–2541) s.v. Platon 2, and K.J. Dover in *OCD*^{3} 1193 s.v. Plato 2. Plato's *Nikai* was produced shortly after Aristophanes' *Peace* (421), his *Hyperbolus* before 417, his *Phaon* probably in 391.

[15] Cf. Körte in *RE* V A 2 (1934, 2174–2176) s.v. Theopompos 6, and Dover in *OCD*^{3} 1505 s.v. Theopompos 2. Theopompos' placing in the lists of victors at the Dionysia and Lenaea (*IG* ii^2 2325.68, 129 = V B1 cols. 3.2 and 2.3 Mette) implies that his first victories were achieved between 410 and 403 BCE, while his references to Plato's *Phaedo* 96e (fr. 16) and to Peron the perfumer (1, 17; cf. Anaxandrides 41, Antiphanes 37) show that he was still active in the 370s.

Comedy list went on writing also into the period of New Comedy. Thus Alexis was active from the 350s certainly up to the last decade of the century and quite possibly as late as the 270s,[16] while Philemon, whose first plays appeared several years before Menander came on the scene,[17] seems basically to have been a New Comedy poet, despite his inclusion in the Middle Comedy list. Partly because of his inclusion in that list, and partly because his first productions date to the 350s, Alexis is still generally—but wrongly—considered to have been primarily a Middle Comedy poet. In fact, it has been plausibly argued that Alexis wrote the Greek original of Plautus' *Poenulus*, presumably as a typical product of New Comedy,[18] and it would be surprising if he did not compose a good many plays of the same type in the later part of his career. Accordingly, when we look at the fragments of Alexis, we must expect to find a mixture of Middle Comedy and New Comedy material.

With these caveats in mind, we may attempt now to paint our picture of the development of comedy throughout the fourth century. That picture may often be dim or blurred, but we must seek to make it as faithful a reflection of the lost truth as the nature of the evidence will allow. The period we are considering is most conveniently defined as extending from the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 BCE down to the thirties or twenties of the fourth century BCE, by which time the style, structure, plot choices, and character presentation that we call New Comedy had been effectively typified and were in regular operation. As Scaliger was the first to observe,[19] the period of Middle Comedy was mainly one of transition. During its seventy-five or so years, the Old Comedy associated with a powerful fifth-century Athens died, and the New Comedy that today we associate especially with Menander was born. In addition, it was a period of experiment. Its comedies seem to have had a wide variety of themes, targets, and treatments. Even if one or two types of play seem to have dominated at different times during the period, no single category or genre of play deserves the label of "Middle Comedy" more than any other.

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[16] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 15–18).

[17] Cf. Körte in *RE* XIX 2 (1938, 2137–2145) s.v. Philemon 7, and my entry in *OCD*[3] 1159 s.v. Philemon 2. Philemon won his first victory at the Dionysia in 327 BCE, according to the *Marmor Parium* (*FGrH* 239 B 7).

[18] Cf. my paper (1959, 252–262), my Alexis commentary (1996, 284–287), and Maurach (1975, 58–61).

[19] Scaliger (1561 [i 7] 12).

3. *Leading Dramatists in the Period of Middle Comedy*

ALEXIS.[20] The *Suda* α 1138 (*testimonium* 1 Kassel-Austin and Arnott) says that Alexis came from Thurii in Magna Graecia, produced 245 plays as a comic poet, and was the paternal uncle of Menander. An anonymous tractate on comedy (*testimonium* 2 Kassel-Austin and Arnott) alleges that Menander spent much time with Alexis and was trained by him. The reliability of both reports is uncertain. Menander's father was an Athenian, and it is therefore unlikely—although not impossible—that he could have had a brother settled in Thurii. If Alexis really hailed from that city, it seems more probable that he came early to Athens, made a name for himself there as a comic playwright, and through his reputation was then asked to teach his craft to the young Menander. Yet the allegation of a tutorial connection might have been no less a fiction than that of a blood relationship and could have been fabricated by Hellenistic or later scholarship in order to explain some remarkable similarities between Menander and Alexis.[21]

The figure of 245 plays appears extraordinarily high for one playwright's output and may have been at least slightly exaggerated; yet the known titles attested for Alexis number 146, while anecdotal and other evidence made Alexis a centenarian who died while still active dramatically. His dates can be plausibly computed as ca. 375–ca. 275 BCE, thus making his career extend over fifty years of New Comedy as well as the second half of the Middle Comedy period. Even with such longevity, however, Alexis could not have had all of his plays produced at the two major Athenian dramatic festivals.

Inscriptional evidence assigns to him only two, three, or four victories at the Lenaea, where his name (in the list of victorious poets there, arranged apparently in chronological order of first victory) appears eight places after Anaxandrides, six after Eubulus, five after Antiphanes, and

[20] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 198–199) and *DNP* 1 (1996, 488), my paper (1991, 327–338), and Alexis commentary (1996, 3–18).

[21] See especially my Alexis commentary (1996, 12–13). Alexis could have been a younger brother of Menander's father, born in Athens or Thurii. Since Thurii was founded only seventy years or so before Alexis' birth as a Panhellenic colony under the guidance of Pericles, with Athenians among the original settlers, the family of Menander's father might have forged links with Thurii, and Alexis might have been a legitimate or adopted son of an uncle of Menander who had settled in the colony.

fourteen before Menander. A victory at the Dionysia is recorded in 347 BCE (*testimonium* 6), and a second place at an unnamed and undated Athenian festival (*testimonium* 7).

AMPHIS.[22] The *Suda* α 1760 (*testimonium* 1 Kassel-Austin) calls him Athenian, but he may have come from Andros if an inscription of 332/331 BCE (*IG* ii 347.11, 16) is rightly interpreted as referring to him.[23] His name does not appear in extant dramatic inscriptions, but it could have been lost in the gap following the names of Alexis and Aristophon in the list of victors at the Lenaea. Twenty-seven or twenty-eight of his play titles are known, seven indicating myth travesty and five named after males or females with specific jobs. No dates are recorded, but one fragment (13) has a reference to Plato, and two (23, 24) to hetairai active around 350 BCE.

ANAXANDRIDES.[24] He was probably born at Camirus in Rhodes (so Athenaeus 9.374b, cf. the *Suda* α 1982: respectively *testimonia* 2 and 1 Kassel-Austin), but the *Suda* mentions an alternative tradition that claims he came from Colophon. The *Suda* attributes to him sixty-five titles, of which forty or forty-one are known, and ten dramatic victories. Three of these were at the Lenaea (*testimonium* 6), the first in 376 (*testimonium* 3). Anaxandrides' career may have extended from the 380s (fr. 42 describes the wedding feast of Iphicrates, held probably in 387/386 BCE[25]) to the early 340s (*testimonium* 5 appears to mention a victory in 349[26]). Fifteen titles imply myth travesty, and six are named after persons with identified jobs. Athenaeus 9.374a–b (*testimonium* 2) quotes a writer born towards the end of Anaxandrides' life,[27] whose graphic description of the comic poet has the imprint of truth: he was tall, handsome, and long haired,

[22] Cf. G. Kaibel in *RE* I 2 (1894, 1953–1954) s.v. Amphis 2, Nesselrath (1990a, 197) and in *DNP* 1 (1996, 617), Fraser-Matthews (1987, 35), and my entry in *OCD*[3] 76 s.v. Amphis.

[23] This inscription spells the name Anphis. Neither Amphis nor Anphis is recorded as a name anywhere in Attica.

[24] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* I 2 (1894, 2078–2079 s.v. Anaxandrides), Webster (1970, 40), Nesselrath (1990a, 194–195) and in *DNP* 1 (1996, 669–670), and Dover's entry in *OCD*[3] 86 s.v. Anaxandrides.

[25] See especially Davies (1971, 249–250).

[26] The inscription bearing this information (*IG* Urbis Romae 218.1–14 = VI A 4.1–14 Mette) is seriously damaged, but the identification of Anaxandrides as the dramatist being dealt with at this point seems convincing.

[27] Chamaeleon (fr. 43 Wehrli), who was born ca. 350 BCE.

wore a crimson cloak with a gold hem, and whenever one of his comedies failed to win first prize, he took the text to the incense market and gave it to the dealers there to chop it up.

ANAXILAS.[28] His name, like that of Amphis, does not appear in what remains of the inscription listing victors at the Lenaea, and it might just have originally featured in the same gap. Nineteen or twenty play titles are known, of which from three to six may have indicated myth travesty. His career was perhaps limited to the 340s and the 330s; allusions in frr. 5, 14, 26 (ridicule of Plato), 8 (Demosthenes' Halonnesos speech), and 22 (hetairai of that time[29]) evidently belong to that period.

ANTIPHANES.[30] His birthplace is given variously as Athens or Larissa (so the anonymous tractate on comedy = *testimonium* 2 Kassel-Austin) or Cius on the Propontis, Smyrna, or Rhodes (so the *Suda* α 2375 = *testimonium* 1). According to *testimonium* 2, Antiphanes began his dramatic career in the mid- or late 380s; if this is correct, it will be wiser to interpret the claim in *testimonium* 1 that "he flourished" (γέγονε)[31] in the years 408–404 as a misreading of some earlier source indicating when "he was born" (ἐγένετο). In that case he would have died in the late 330s, if we accept a further statement in *testimonium* 1 that he lived to be seventy-four. Yet a fragment from Antiphanes' *Parekdidomene* (185 Kassel-Austin) refers to King Seleucus, and that must have been written in or after 307 BCE. If its author was the Antiphanes discussed in this paragraph, the datings proposed above would have to be rejected; there is a possibility, however, that some of the plays attributed to our Antiphanes were written by a later dramatist with the same name.[32]

The number of Antiphanes' comedies is disputed, but always indicates notable productivity: 365 or 280 (*testimonium* 1) or 260 (*testimonium* 2). All of these numbers (like the 245 given for Alexis) would make it impossible for Antiphanes to have had all of his plays produced at the

[28] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* I 2 (1894, 2084, s.v. Anaxilas), Nesselrath (1990a, 199–200), and in *DNP* 1 (1996, 671–672), and Dover's entry in *OCD*[3] 86 s.v. Anaxilas.

[29] Cf. Schiassi (1951, 234–235 and 234n3).

[30] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* I 2 (1894, 2518–2521 s.v. Antiphanes 15), Nesselrath (1990a, 193–194) and in *DNP* 1 (1996, 781–782 s.vv. Antiphanes 1 and 2 of Dover's entry in *OCD*[3] 111 s.v. Antiphanes), Amoureaux (1995), Mangidis (2003), and Konstantikos (2004, 9–40).

[31] On the *Suda*'s use of γέγονε in such contexts, see my paper (1991, 328–329) and the works cited there in n. 5.

[32] Cf. Kassel-Austin II (1991, 482).

two major dramatic festivals in Athens. There he won thirteen victories (*testimonium* 1), eight of them at the Lenaea (*IG* ii^2 2325.146 = V C 1 col. 3.7 Mette = *testimonium* 4), where his name appears four places after Anaxandrides, two after Eubulus, and one after Ephippus. Between 139 and 141 titles from Antiphanes' vast output are still known; at least twenty-two of them imply myth travesty, twenty-two persons with specific jobs, and at least twelve characters from a city or land other than Athens.

ARAROS.[33] This son of Aristophanes produced his father's *Kokalos* and *Aiolosikon*[34] for him shortly after 388 BCE. The *Suda* α 3737 dates the beginning of Araros' dramatic career between 376 and 372 BCE. Only six titles survive; three imply myth travesty.

ARISTOPHON.[35] On the inscription listing victors at the Lenaea (*IG* ii^2 2325.151 = V C 1 col. 3.12 Mette), a damaged name plausibly supplemented as [Ar]ist[ophon] comes five places after Antiphanes and directly after Alexis. Only eight of his titles are known; one implies myth travesty, and two (*Platon*, *Pythagoristes*) plots possibly ridicule philosophy.[36]

EPHIPPUS.[37] The *Suda* ε 3929 (*testimonium* 1 Kassel-Austin) calls him Athenian. On the inscription listing Lenaean victors (*IG* ii^2 2325.145 = V C 1 col. 3.6 Mette), he comes immediately before Antiphanes and is recorded as winning between one and four victories. Twelve titles are known, of which four to six seem to indicate myth travesty. References in the fragments suggest that he was active from ca. 375 to ca. 340 BCE (fr. 1 mentions Alexander, the ruler of Thessaly 369–358, fr. 16 Cotys the king of Thrace 383–360, fr. 17 the mad Menecrates of Syracuse who was notorious from ca. 370 to ca. 335[38]).

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[33] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* I (1895, 380–381 s.v. Araros 2), Nesselrath (1990a, 192) and in Dobrov (1995, 19–20), Bäbler in *DNP* 1 (1996, 955), my Alexis commentary (1996, 542–543), and Dover's entry in *OCD*^{3} 136.

[34] See hypothesis IV to Aristophanes' *Plutus* (Kassel-Austin III 2 [1984, 33]).

[35] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* II 1 (1895, 1007–1008 s.v. Aristophon 7), and Bäbler in *DNP* 1 (1996, 1133 s.v. Aristophon 4).

[36] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 579–580).

[37] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* V 2 (1905, 2858 s.v. Ephippos 3), Webster (1953, 40–43), Nesselrath (1990a, 196–197), my entry in *OCD*^{3} 529 s.v. Ephippus 1, and Bäbler in *DNP* 3 (1997, 1087 s.v. Ephippos 2).

[38] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 460).

EPICRATES.[39] Athenaeus 10.422 f. (*testimonium* 2 Kassel-Austin) makes him a native of Ambracia and calls him a Middle Comedy poet. He seems to have been active sometime between ca. 380 and ca. 350. Six titles are known, only one implying myth travesty.

EUBULUS.[40] The *Suda* ε 3386 (*testimonium* 1 Kassel-Austin) identifies Eubulus as an Athenian who wrote 104 plays and either won his first victory or began producing his plays between 376 and 372 BCE. On the inscription listing Lenaean victors (*IG* ii^2 2325.144 = V C 1 col. 3.5 Mette) he comes two places after Anaxandrides, one before Ephippus, and two before Antiphanes. His career may have extended from ca. 380 to ca. 330 BCE. Fifty-seven or fifty-eight titles are known, of which half (twenty-seven to twenty-nine) seem to have been myth travesties.

NICOSTRATUS.[41] To this alleged son of Aristophanes[42] between nineteen and twenty-three known titles are attributed, although the existence of another comic poet in the period of New Comedy with the same name[43] causes some confusion over some of these assignments. Remarkably, none of the cited titles clearly indicates myth travesty, although it is possible that Nicostratus' *Oinopoios* (Wine-Maker) is an error for *Oinopion* (in myth, the son of Ariadne and father of Merope).[44]

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[39] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* VI 1 (1907, 120–121 s.v. Epikrates 21), Nesselrath (1990a, 197–198), and Bäbler in *DNP* 3 (1997, 1121 s.v. Epikrates 4).

[40] Cf. Kaibel in *RE* VI 1 (1907, 877–878 s.v. Eubulos 14), R. Hunter (1983, 3–4, 7–16 and *OCD*^{3} 564 s.v. Eubulus 2), and Nesselrath (1990a, 195–196) and in *DNP* 4 (1997, 213–214 s.v. Eubulos 4). Oddly enough, the *Suda* places Eubulus "on the borderline between Middle and Old Comedy"; however, the *Etymologicum Magnum* 451.29, Ammonius the grammarian 169, and Zenobius 1.42, citing Eubulus frr. 30, 39, and 134, rightly identify him as a Middle Comedy poet.

[41] Cf. A. Körte in *RE* XVII 1 (1936, 545 s.v. Nikostratos 20), Dover in *OCD*^{3} 1044 s.v. Nicostratus 1.

[42] There was a dispute in Hellenistic scholarship as to whether Nicostratus or Philetaerus was a son of Aristophanes. Apollodorus of Athens (*GGrH* 244 F 75) supported the claim of the former, and Dicaearchus' circle (fr. *3 Werhli) that of the latter, according to the Arethas scholia on Plato *Apology* 19c (421 Greene = Aristophanes *testimonium* 3.13–16 Kassel-Austin); cf. also the life of Aristophanes attached to mss. V and E = *testimonium* 1.55–56 (following Apollodorus), and the *Suda* φ 308 = Aristophanes *testimonium* 8 = Philetaerus *testimonium* 1 (following the Dicaearchus circle).

[43] Cf. Körte in *RE* XVII 1 (1936, 545–546 s.v. Nikostratos 21), Dover in *OCD*^{3} 1044 s.v. Nicostratus 2.

[44] The *Suda* α 1703 gives the title as Οἰνοποιῷ, but Meursius here conjectured Οἰνοπίωνι because Philetaerus also wrote a play with this title.

PHILETAERUS.[45] This alleged son of Aristophanes[46] comes directly between Anaxandrides and Eubulus on the inscription listing Lenaean victors (*IG* ii^2 2325.143 = V C 1 col. 3.4 Mette), with two victories ascribed to him. Between seventeen and nineteen titles are cited, of which between five and seven imply myth travesty. His career may have extended from the late 380s (fr. 3 mentions an Olympic victor of 384 BCE) to the 350s (fr. 2 alleges that the orator Hyperides loved fish and gambling).

PLATO the comic poet.[47] According to the *Suda* π 1708 (*testimonium* 1 Kassel-Austin), he was an Athenian, and he is generally (*testimonium* 2, 3, 13, 18) identified as an Old Comedy poet and linked with dramatists such as Aristophanes, Cratinus, and Eupolis (e.g., *testimonium* 11, 12, 14ab, 15). The major portion of his career admittedly spanned the last twenty years of the fifth century, but (like Aristophanes) he continued writing at least until the end of the 390s, and his work was labelled Middle Comedy by the scholia of Dionysius Thrax (*Grammatici Graeci* I 3 p. 19 Hilgard = *testimonium* 16). In the roll of victors at the Dionysia, who are presented in the chronological order of their first victories (*IG* ii^2 2325.63 = V B 1 col. 2.12 Mette = *testimonium* 8), Plato comes five places after Aristophanes and four after Eupolis. A late source of uncertain reliability (*testimonium* 6)[48] records a tradition that Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Plato all began their careers between 428 and 424 BCE, but Plato's earliest datable plays seem to be the *Hyperbolos* (between 420 and 416 BCE) and *Nikai* (shortly after 421). Twenty-eight comedies are attributed to him by ancient sources (*testimonium* 1, 3), but thirty-one titles are recorded, of which at least nine seem to have been myth travesties, including the *Phaon*, which was produced in 391.

THEOPHILUS.[49] He straddles the periods of Middle and New Comedy, producing plays at the Dionysia in 329 (*IG* ii^2 2318.354 = I col. 16.10

[45] Cf. Körte in *RE* XIX 2 (1938, 2163–2646 s.v. Philetairos 5), Dover in *OCD*^{3} 1159 s.v. Philetaerus 1.

[46] See note 42 above.

[47] Cf. Körte in *RE* XX 2 (1950, 2537–2541 s.v. Platon 2), Nesselrath (1990a, 34–37), Rosen (1995, 119–137), Dover in *OCD*^{3} 1193 s.v. Plato 2, Sanchis Llopis (1997, 323–340), and Casolari (2000, 91–102).

[48] Cyril of Alexandria, *Adversus Iulianum* 1.13. His figures here are correct for Aristophanes (first play 427 BCE) and almost so for Eupolis (first play 429 BCE: *testimonium* 2a Kassel-Austin).

[49] Cf. Körte in *RE* V A 2 (1934, 2137 s.v. Theophilos 10), Nesselrath (1990a, 200).

Mette) and possibly[50] also in 311 (*IG* ii^2 2323^a .49 = III B 2 col. 1.24 Mette). Twenty-seven titles are known, including between three and five that imply myth travesty, even at this late date.

TIMOCLES.[51] Two entries in the *Suda* (τ 623, 624 = *testimonium* 1 Kassel-Austin) allege that there were two comic poets named Timocles, with twenty specified titles shared between them, but this appears to be an error, probably resulting from confusion with a tragedian of the same name (so Athenaeus 9.407d = *testimonium* 2). In fact, twenty-seven titles are attested. In the Lenaean Victors' List (*IG* ii^2 2325.158 = V C 1 col. 4.7 Mette), Timocles is given only one victory, and his position there, two places before Menander and one before Philemon, may indicate that this victory came in the 330s. His career seems to have extended from the 340s down into the period of New Comedy, since fr. 34.3 mentions an official (γυναικονόμος, controller of women) who was introduced into Athenian society only under the regime of Demetrius of Phalerum (317–307). The extant titles and fragments are notable both for the presence of critical comments on contemporary politicians and for the survival of myth travesty (four titles) at this late date.

4. *Aristophanes and Middle Comedy*

The period with which this chapter is dealing begins with the total defeat of Athens in 404 BCE, when her dreams of imperial power were savagely shattered. That reverse was followed by nine months of terror under the oligarchic regime of the Thirty, and when in 403 democracy was restored, Athens still had to face the economic problems that accompanied and followed her defeat: the loss of the revenues that had come year by year from the empire, interruptions to her corn supply, closure of the silver mines at Laurium, and flight of many slaves from Attica in the later years of the war.[52]

[50] [Θεόφιλο]ς here is a plausible supplementation, since Theophilos is the only known author of the play title named on the inscription (*Pankratiastes*) whose name ends in *sigma* and satisfactorily fills the lacuna.

[51] Cf. Körte in *RE* VI A 1 (1936, 1260–1262 s.v. Timokles 3), Bevilacqua (1939, 25–64), Constanides (1969, 49–61), Nesselrath (1990a, 200), and Dover in *OCD*^{3} 1528.

[52] Contrast, for example, David (1984, 3–20), Sommerstein (1984a, 314–333), and A.M. Bowie (1993, 268–289).

The last two surviving plays of Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth*, were produced a considerable time after Athens' defeat—in 391[53] and 388 BCE, respectively—when Athens was beginning to recover. Today there is no general agreement about the extent to which these two comedies reflected either the changes in contemporary Athenian society or a decline—if any—in Aristophanes' powers. Yet many scholars identify these plays as embryonic products of Middle Comedy, despite the fact that they retain many features typical in the nine fifth-century plays: an imaginative but far-fetched starting idea and its realisation, final scenes revealing some consequences of the new order that this realisation establishes, an agon (in *Wealth* at least) fought by two diametrically opposed combatants, and a series of scenes in which the play's hero and his slave deal with visitors complaining about, or wishing to profit from, the new order.

What places *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth* at least on the border between Old and Middle Comedy, however, is their treatment of the chorus. In the nine fifth-century comedies, the chorus played a significant role with its entrance song, several witty and often hard-hitting lyrics, and above all the parabasis, with its partial or complete rupture of the dramatic illusion. In *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth*, the parabasis has disappeared. *Wealth* at least[54] retains an entrance dialogue and song whose preserved text is shared between an actor and the chorus, but *Ecclesiazusae* appears to innovate[55] with a silent entry of the chorus followed shortly afterwards by their departure singing an antithesis to the customary entrance song. In both plays thereafter, the chorus has little that is written out for us in our texts—two brief songs or chants (478–503, 571–580) and a

[53] On the dating of *Ecclesiazusae*, see especially the works cited by MacDowell (1995, 303n4) and A.H. Sommerstein (1998, 1–8).

[54] See especially Händel (1963, 126–139).

[55] The parodos of *Ecclesiazusae* provides a major surprise, as challenging in its boldness as any formal element in fifth-century comedy. Although there is still some dispute about the staging of the chorus' first entry in this play, there is much to be said for Ussher's suggestion (his 1973 commentary on vv. 51–53 and 285–310, following his paper [1969, 24–25]) that the main body of the chorus enters silently at v. 30, followed by seven members of the chorus individually named (v. 41), with their leader involved only at v. 54. Thereafter what is formally called the parodos (285–310), in lyrics after four initial iambic tetrameters, is in fact an exit song for the chorus sung while they leave the orchestra by the parodos imagined to lead them to the Pnyx. Was this surprising move influenced by precedents in some earlier comedy now lost, or by tragic parallels such as Aeschylus *Eumenides* 234 or Euripides *Helen* 385?

brief request for dramatic success in *Ecclesiazusae* (1155–1162)[56] and also in both plays a very few other perfunctory comments in various metres (*Ecclesiazusae* 514–516, 581–582, 1127, 1134, 1154 and four closing lyrics 1180–1183; *Wealth* 328–331, 487–488, 631, dochmiacs at 637 and 639–640, 962–963, and two closing anapaestic tetrameters at 1208–1209). The striking choral songs that characterize fifth-century comedy have mainly been replaced by ἐμβόλιμα, interpolated lyrics whose words were not deemed worthy of preservation. Their place is denoted in our manuscripts by the laconic note ΧΟΡΟΥ, (a song) of the chorus.[57] Here we appear to be on the way to the etiolated chorus of revellers in Menander, whose first appearance is announced by one of the characters at the end of each first act (*Aspis* 246–248, *Dyskolos* 230–232, *Epitrepontes* 169–171, *Perikeiromene* 261–262), but who then entertained the audience solely between the acts without being integrated into the plot or having the words of their songs preserved.

At this point, however, a warning must again be sounded. The limited validity of general statements needs to be acknowledged when the available evidence is both limited and fragmentary. That evidence does not allow us to define just when and how the Menandrean chorus replaced the old one. At some point in the fourth century, the Aristophanic type of chorus finally died, and at some (other?) point, the new type of chorus first appeared. The decline of the old type may have been gradual, but was not necessarily rectilinear. Both sorts of chorus could leave existed side by side for a spell. Certainly the old type of chorus was still (occasionally?) flickering after Aristophanes' death. The fragments of plays like Eubulus' *Stephanopolides* prove this.[58] This play, like the majority of the preserved fifth-century plays by Aristophanes, took its title from its chorus of female garland sellers, who appear to have had an entrance song in lyric dactyls composed for them by Eubulus not dissimilar to the exit parodos of the *Eccelesiazusae*, although disappointingly there is no evidence for dating this play to any precise stage of Eubu-

[56] Thus it paves the way for the similar brief (and virtually unvaried) requests for victory that end Menander's plays.

[57] At *Ecclesiazusae* 729–730 and 876–877 (ms. R: omitted in Γ, B, and the Aldine) and *Plutus* 626–627 (Ald.), 770–771 (RV and Ald. have κομμάτιον χοροῦ, a short piece for the chorus), 801–802 (R's corrector and Ald.), 958–959, and 1096–1097 (Ald.). See especially Handley (1953a, 55–61), Koster (1957, 117–135), Pöhlmann (1977, 69–81), R. Hunter (1979, 23–33), and Rothwell (1995, 99–118).

[58] Cf. especially R. Hunter (1979, 36–37) and his edition of *Eubulus* (1983, 191–199).

lus' career. Two charming fragments of this entrance song have been preserved by Athenaeus. The first (fr. 102 Kassel-Austin) runs as follows:

> ὦ μάκαρ, ἥτις ἔχουσ' ἐν δωματίῳ
> στρουθίον ἀεροφόρητον
> λεπτότατον περὶ σῶμα συνίλλεται
> ἡδύτατον[59] περὶ νυμφίον εὔτριχα,
> κισσὸς ὅπως καλάμῳ περιφύεται
> † αὐξόμενος ἔαρος † ὀλολυγόνος
> ἔρωτι κατατετηκώς
>
> O happy the girl in her bower who wears
> A garland of breeze-borne soapwort [?] as she
> Presses her sinuous form in embrace
> To a bridegroom of breath sweet and hair elegant,
> Like ivy that clings to the sweet flag in spring,
> As it grows while it pines for a nightingale's[60] love.

In another portion of this song (fr. 103), one of the chorus appears to be addressed in exactly the same way in which individual members of the chorus are named in the corresponding song of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*:

> Αἰγίδιον, σὺ δὲ τόνδε φορήσεις
> στέφανον πολυποίκιλον ἀνθέων
> γρυπότατον, χαριέστατον, ὦ Ζεῦ.
>
> Aigidion, now this garland of flowers
> Multi-colored you'll wear,
> Most perfectly curved and charming, O Zeus.

Even so, the decline of the chorus in the last two extant plays of Aristophanes does not seem to be matched by any other formal features that point the way to New Comedy. It needs to be stressed that *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth* in aspects of structure and staging, for instance, are still very much rooted in the conventions of fifth-century comedy. I have already mentioned the presence of an agon in *Wealth*. To this can be added the fact that choral interludes in both plays exceeded the standard four that separated the five acts of Menander's comedies. *Ecclesiazusae* has a parodos, two choral lyrics, and two additional places marked by χορου̃, and *Wealth* has a parodos and five recorded instances of χορου̃, apart from

[59] Meineke's conjecture for ms. A's ἡδυπότατον (Athenaeus 15.679b, citing the fragment). This form of the superlative of ἡδύς is not recorded elsewhere in fourth-century Greek, but the comparative ἡδύτερος occurs in Theophrastus HP 3.2.1.

[60] On this translation of ὀλολυγόνος, see especially White (1979, 9–16).

the further one conjectured by Dindorf at vv. 321–322.[61] Both plays too require the normal Aristophanic cast of four actors,[62] whereas in Menander the script is so constructed that it can be performed by a cast of three.[63] Finally, the two Aristophanic comedies reveal Old Comedy's variability of time and place; there is no fixed identification of stage houses or a limitation of stage action to a single day, as are normal in New Comedy.[64] Thus one of the two houses in *Ecclesiazusae* is inhabited by Blepyros and Praxagora from v. 1 to 816 (the other house is not used during this part of the play), but the two houses are occupied by two different women from v. 877 on,[65] while in *Wealth* at v. 626, Karion takes Ploutos offstage, and after a choral interlude, Karion reenters at 627, after having in the interim taken the title figure to a shrine of Asklepios, stayed there overnight, and brought him back to Chremylos' house.

5. *The Comedy of Myth*

Although in the first half of the fourth century there continued to be a wide variety in choice of subject, there can be little doubt that one type of play dominated the comic stage: mythological burlesque. When Aristophanes' *Wealth* was performed in 388 BCE, three of his rivals' plays—Aristomenes' *Admetos*, Nicophon's *Adonis*, and Alcaeus' *Pasiphae*—were clearly myth travesties.[66] This was no new type of comedy, however; although no fifth-century play by Aristophanes survives structured entirely on myth burlesque, titles of lost comedies such as *Danaïdes*, *Dramata* or *Kentauros*, *Lemniai*, *Phoinissai*, and *Polyidos* indicate that this was a popular type of comedy for him too,[67] and scenes of parody in extant plays like *Acharnians* and *Thesmophoriazusae* give some valuable glimpses of Aristophanic methods in the treatment of myth. The popularity of myth travesty in the period of Old Comedy is indicated also by

[61] See note 57 above.

[62] The first scene of *Ecclesiazusae* requires four actors on stage together (vv. 54–56); vv. 1044–1065 would be difficult to perform with only three actors; at Plutus 1174 two characters depart and at 1171–1172 two new characters immediately enter. Cf. generally Dover (1972, 26–27) and Ussher's edition of *Ecclesiazusae* (1973, xxx–xxxiii).

[63] Cf., for example, Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 16–19) and Sandbach (1975, 197–204).

[64] See, for example, my paper (1979, 346–352) and R. Hunter (1979, 28–33).

[65] See, for example, Dover (1966, 14–17) and the editions of *Ecclesiazusae* by Ussher (1973, xxx–xxxiii) and Sommerstein (1998, 28–30).

[66] See especially Nesselrath (1990a, 190).

[67] Aristophanes' last two plays *Aiolosikon* and *Kokalos*, produced after 388 BCE, were also myth travesties. Cf. Perusino (1987, 59–72).

a wealth of titles of lost plays by other poets, supplemented occasionally by informative fragments from those plays or material of other kinds. The best known of Old Comedy burlesques is Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros*, whose complicated plot is summarized on a scrap of papyrus.[68] This play was an elaborate travesty of the story of the judgment of Paris, his seduction of Helen, and subsequent events in Troy, spiced up with political innuendoes relevant to the time of the play's production around the beginning of the Peloponnesian War.

Although the fragments of myth burlesques in the period of Middle Comedy are often nugatory and give no indication of plot or treatment, the titles themselves can be instructive.[69] For instance, they indicate the following proportions of myth titles to other subjects; more than one in three plays burlesqued myth, as the following figures show:

	Known titles	Myth titles
Alexis	138	?20[70]
Amphis	27–28	7
Anaxandrides	40–41	14–15
Antiphanes	141	25–30
Ephippus	12	4–5
Eubulus	57–58	28–29
Timocles	27	3–5
Total	442–445	101–111

The stories chosen were remarkably varied, covering the whole gamut of myth. In the first half of the fourth century, the preferences were sometimes expected, sometimes surprising. Three cycles were particularly popular. The first was stories, whether derived from the *Iliad*

[68] *P. Oxy*. 663. The best editions are now Austin (1973, 35–37) and Kassel-Austin IV (1983, 140–141), with full bibliographies, to which Tatti (1986, 325–332), Heath (1990a, 144–149, with a useful discussion of myth burlesque generally in Old Comedy), I.C. Storey (1992, 11–12), and Revermann (1997, 197–200) may now be added.

[69] The evidence is gathered very usefully by Nesselrath (1990a, 192–200), but one warning needs to be given here: titles do not always clearly indicate their subject. For example, Alexis' *Manteis* may have travestied the legend of Polyidus (see my commentary [1996, 440–441]), while the title *Lemniai* (common to Antiphanes and Diphilus) might imply either a burlesque of the Hypsipyle legend or the adventures of two or more women of Lemnos in a plot of New Comedy type (see my Alexis commentary [1996, 403]; cf. also J.J. Henderson [1995, 177]).

[70] The number of myth travesties among the extant titles of Alexis may at first sight seem low, but it must always be remembered that this poet lived on well into New Comedy times when myth burlesque was relatively uncommon.

or elsewhere, about Troy: two or more plays by Alexis dealing with Helen;[71] Anaxandrides' *Anchises*, *Achilles*, *Helen*, *Pandaros*, *Protesilaos*; Antiphanes' *Philoctetes* and perhaps his *Kares*; Eubulus' *Anchises*, *Dolon*, *Lakones*, or *Leda*, *Mysoi*, *Phoenix*; and Theophilus' *Neoptolemus*. Second was plays based on the *Odyssey* or other stories about Odysseus: Alexis' *Odysseus Aponizomenos* and *Odysseus Hyphainon*; Amphis' *Odysseus*; Anaxandrides' *Odysseus*; Anaxilas' *Calypso* and *Circe*; Antiphanes' *Cyclops*; and Eubulus' *Circe*, *Nausicaa*, and *Odysseus*. The third group consists of stories associated with Heracles: Alexis' *Hesione*, *Linos*, and *Sciron*; Anaxandrides' *Heracles*; Antiphanes' *Alcestis*, *Antaios*, *Busiris*, and *Omphale*; Ephippus' *Busiris*; and Eubulus' *Auge*, *Busiris*, and *Kerkopes*.

There are perhaps two surprises. One of these is a group of plays that can be interpreted as myth travesty only insofar as, like myths proper in the view of contemporary audiences, they involved real or imagined figures from past history: Alexis' *Aesop* and *Archilochus*; Antiphanes' *Phaon*; and *Sappho* as the title figure of comedies by Amphis, Antiphanes, Eubulus, and Timotheus. The other surprise is a group of comedies celebrating or more probably ridiculing the birth of certain divinities: *Aphrodite*, *Pan*, *Zeus* (Philiscus); *Aphrodite*, *Dionysus*, the *Muses* (Polyzelus); *Aphrodite* (Antiphanes, Nicophon); *Athena* (Hermippus); *Dionysus* (Anaxandrides, Demetrius); *Pan* (Araros); and Antiphanes wrote a *Theogonia*; cf. also com. adesp. fr. 1062 Kassel-Austin (VIII, 1995, 355). These titles seem to cluster in time particularly to the later years of Old Comedy and the marginal years between it and Middle Comedy.[72]

In the period of Middle Comedy, it seems likely that two related types of mythological burlesque coexisted, sometimes doubtless in the same play. The first type would be straightforward travesty of a myth, with the noble heroes and heroines of the story redrawn as contemporary and often vulgar Greeks and barbarians. How much the process of vulgarization here owed to fifth-century comedy, and how much to the influence of Euripides, with his scandalizing and deglamorized view of ancient legend,[73] we do not now know. In these Middle Comedy burlesques, the

[71] Plays of Alexis are cited with the titles *Helen*, *Helen's Abduction*, *(Helen's) Suitors*, and *Tyndareus*, but it is uncertain whether *Helen* is a different play from *H.'s Abduction* and *H.'s Suitors* or just an abbreviated form of one of these two titles, and whether *Tyndareus* is an independent play or an alternative title for *H.'s Abduction*. See my Alexis commentary (1996, 197–201).

[72] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 203, 234), amplifying these remarks in Nesselrath (1995, 1–9), together with Taplin (1993, 82–83, 115).

[73] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 205–207) and Cusset (2003, 31–52).

goddess Aphrodite, for example, becomes a bawd, advertising the fee that she charges for the services of her boy-friend Phaon (Plato's *Phaon*, fr. 188 Kassel-Austin); Makareus is described as using alcohol to overcome his inhibitions before raping or seducing his sister (Antiphanes' *Aeolus*, fr. 19);[74] and Orestes and Aegisthus leave the stage together at the end of their confrontation, now the best of friends (an unknown play, mentioned by Aristotle in *Poetics* 13, 1453a36–39[75]). Here is most of what remains from an amusing exchange between Herakles and Linos his teacher in the latter's library (Alexis' *Linos*, fr. 140):[76]

(Λινοσ) βιβλίον
ἐντεῦθεν ὅ τι βούλει προσελθὼν γὰρ λαβέ.
ἔπειτ' ἀναγνώσει, πάνυ γε διασκοπῶν
ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπιγραμμάτων ἀτρέμα τε καὶ σχολῇ.
Ὀρφεὺς ἔνεστιν, Ἡσίοδος, τραγῳδίαι,
Ἐπίχαρμος, Ὅμηρος, Χοιρίλος, συγγράμματα
παντόδαπα. δηλώσεις γὰρ οὕτως τὴν φύσιν,
ἐπὶ τί μάλισθ' ὥρμησε. (Ηρακλησ) τουτὶ λαμβάνω.
(Λι.) δεῖξον τί ἐστι πρῶτον. (Ηρ.) ὀψαρτυσία,
ὥς φησι τοὐπίγραμμα. (Λι.) φιλόσοφός τις εἶ,
εὔδηλον, ὃς παρεὶς τοσαῦτα γράμματα
Σίμου τέχνην ἔλαβες. (Ηρ.) ὁ Σῖμος δ' ἐστὶ τίς;
(Λι.) μαλ' εὐφυὴς ἄνθρωπος· ἐπὶ τραγῳδίαν
ὥρμηκε νῦν, καὶ τῶν μὲν ὑποκριτῶν πολὺ
κράτιστός ἐστιν ὀψοποιός, ὡς δοκεῖ
τοῖς χρωμένοις, τῶν δ' ὀψοποιῶν ὑποκριτής.

(Linos) Go and get
A book from there—just anything you like.
You must think hard, while looking at the titles
Quite placidly and at your ease. Then read.
In there is Orpheus, Hesiod, Greek tragedy,
Epicharmus, Homer, Choerilus, all sorts
Of prose. Thus you'll reveal your own true self,
To what it's most attracted. (Herakles) I'll take this.
(Li.) Show what it is first! (He.) It's a cookery book,
That's what the title says. (Li.) You are a man of culture,
That's clear, ignoring so much literature,
And taking Simos' manual. (He.) This Simos, who
Is he? (Li.) A very talented man. He's now gone in

[74] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 207–208).
[75] See my Alexis commentary (1996, 501–502).
[76] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 227–229) and my Alexis commentary (1996, 404–415), where the differences in my text from that printed by Kassel-Austin are defended, and several points outlined in my discussion of the fragment are more fully developed.

> For tragedy, and connoisseurs say he's
> By far best cook among the actors, and
> Best actor among the cooks!

Alexis here does not miss a trick. The joke at the end—which incidentally marks the first appearance in literature of one of the modern world's favorite joke formulas—is a good one. The hackneyed vulgarization of Heracles' gluttony is given a new twist, which enables the writer to poke fun at what was presumably a fashionable cookery book of the time. And the presence of Heracles and Linos together in what is portrayed as a fourth-century Athenian library produces an eye-catching gallery of literary anachronisms; did Linos' texts of Greek tragedy perhaps include Sophocles' *Trachiniae* or Euripides' *Heracles*?

Such exploitations of myth by comic vulgarization and anachronism form one kind of burlesque practised in Middle Comedy. A second kind would subsume the parody of currently popular tragedies, and particularly those of Euripides. Both kinds of burlesque might well occur in one and the same comedy. It is true that there is no direct, incontrovertible evidence that tragic scenes or even whole tragedies were ever guyed by Middle Comedy playwrights, but a number of hints can be found, all pointing in the one direction. Euripidean melodramas like the *Orestes* were extremely popular in fourth-century Athens.[77] They were frequently remounted on the stage, and some of their lines became familiar enough to be inserted into alien comic scenes for parodic purposes. Many Middle-Comedy titles, too, were identical with titles from tragedy, especially Euripidean ones. About half of Eubulus' extant titles imply mythological burlesque; eleven are shared with Euripides, and eight with other tragedians. Is it then unlikely that, at least in some of the plays with shared titles, Eubulus would have parodied some of the more celebrated Euripidean scenes? Aristophanes, after all, had already parodied scenes from Euripides' *Helen* and *Andromeda* in his *Thesmophoriazusae*. Eubulus and other fourth-century comedians are unlikely to have done less in plays whose titles so often reflected a previous tragic treatment of myth: for instance, two *Seven against Thebes* titles (Alexis, Amphis), more than two *Helens* (Alexis, Anaxandrides), at least one *Bacchae* (Antiphanes), *Antiope* (Eubulus), and *Orestes* (Alexis).

The total loss of plays of this type makes us pose so many questions, none at the moment safely answerable. Why did myth travesty flourish

[77] Cf. my paper (1986, 4).

so rampantly in the first half of the fourth century, but thereafter become virtually an endangered species? And was there any connection between the postulated earlier Middle Comedy parodies of Euripidean tragedy, and a later New Comedy game played by Menander with a Hellenistically intellectual cunning in at least one of his plays, where a well-known situation was borrowed from a play by Euripides, and then modernized into nonmythological, contemporary Athenian terms, with an occasional quotation from the Euripidean source tossed in to point up the connection?

I refer here to the scene in Menander's *Sikyonioi* (or *-ios*),[78] where a very long speech by a character probably named Eleusinios[79] (176–271) exploits the equally lengthy messenger speech in Euripides' *Orestes* (866–956).[80] The Euripidean messenger describes how he attended a public assembly at Argos that condemned Orestes and Electra to death after the murder of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. For his play Menander created a modern, bourgeois Athenian parallel to Euripides' tragic situation, replacing the heroic royals of myth with ordinary, unimportant Greeks—a young girl and her loyal attendant slave—and substituting a dispute about the girl's birth and legal standing for the Euripidean murder trial. Although the Menander speech is not completely preserved in the Sorbonne papyrus, the comic poet can be seen to have implanted several quotations and echoes of the Euripidean speech into his own script in order to point up the connection.

Menander was not the inventor of this type of sophisticated exploitation—parody and burlesque here would be inappropriate terms—of a Euripidean scene. More than a century earlier, Aristophanes had done exactly the same in his *Acharnians* of 425 BCE, where Dikaiopolis' speech opposing current Athenian policy in the war against Sparta (vv. 497–556) exploits another Euripidean speech—that made by Telephus in the play that bears his name—where the tragic hero argued that the Mysians in the Trojan War had a right to defend themselves against the Greek invaders. Aristophanes exploits Telephus' speech in exactly the same way as Menander—by redrawing the heroic scene of myth as a contemporary

[78] On the title see especially Belardinelli (1982, 15–20) and (1994, 56–59), and both my paper (1997a, 1–3) and my edition of Sikyonioi (2000, 196–198).

[79] So first (and rightly) Kassel (1965, 9 = 1991, 280).

[80] Cf., for example, Belardinelli (1984, 396–402) and (1994, 54–56), and my paper (1986, 3–9).

situation—yet underlines the parallelism by a series of quotations from the Euripidean speech that are placed at significant points in the comic one.

The methodological similarity here between Euripides and Menander is striking and raises a question about possible links. Both playwrights could have hit upon the same technique independently. Menander could have copied Aristophanes. But it seems to me inherently more probable that the type of exploitation devised by Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* was or became a standard element in myth travesty throughout Old and Middle Comedy and so was inherited by Menander as part of an established and continuing tradition.

6. *Politics, Philosophy, and Personal Attack*[81]

a. *Politics*

Attacks on politicians and innovatory thinkers are part and parcel of Aristophanic comedy, both as structural themes of individual plays (here Cleon in *Knights* and Socrates in *Clouds* are the obvious examples), and also frequently in passing remarks or individual songs. Such attacks and involvements continue in Aristophanes' fourth-century plays. The two major themes of *Ecclesiazusae*—women's seizure of political power and the communisation of property and people—are as intensely political as anything in his earlier plays, and leading political figures are subjected to attack or at least mild ridicule (Agyrrhius 102, 184–188, Cannonus 1089–1091, Cephalus 248–253, Euaeon 408–425, Euripides the politician 823–829, Neoclides 254–255, 398–407, Thrasybulus 202–204, 356); in *Plutus* some of these names recur (Agyrrhius 176, Neoclides 665–666, 716–725, 747, Thrasybulus 550, 1146–1147), to be joined by the otherwise unknown Pamphilus (174–175).[82] What needs to be remembered here, however, is that gentle ridicule or even at times harsher censure for sexual activities would not always have been interpreted or intended as serious opposition to the persons concerned, but rather as acknowledgement that they were important personalities in Athens.

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[81] See, for example, Webster (1953, 37–50).

[82] See, for example, Webster (1953, 31–36), Ussher's commentary on *Ecclesiazusae* (1973, ad loc.), and the entries under these names in Osborne-Byrne (1994) (8, Ag. 1; 255, Cann. 1; 162, Euai. 1; 183, Eurip. 11; 328, Neocl. 4; 357, Pamph.; 228, Thras.). On this Euripides, see also Davies (1971, 202–204).

After the death of Aristophanes, especially in the first half of the fourth century, a relatively small number of comedies can be identified whose titles (and occasionally too their fragments) imply political themes as major components of their plots. Literary forms develop, change, and die, but often slowly, gradually. A title *Eirene* (Peace) is attested for Eubulus, but on uncertain authority.[83] The one fragment (40 Kassel-Austin) surviving from Anaxandrides' *Poleis* (Cities) introduces an Athenian telling an Egyptian that their customs differ and that he has no wish to form an alliance with him. In 360/359 BCE, envoys from Egypt were honoured in Athens, but failed to secure an alliance with them against Persia;[84] it is reasonable to suppose that Anaxandrides' play was inspired by that event.[85] Both Amphis and Alexis wrote plays entitled *Gynaikokratia* (Government by women); in Alexis' play some women are instructed to sit and watch in a block of seats at the back of the theatre just like foreign women (fr. 42), but whether this implies a plot in some ways imitating those of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* or *Lysistrata* cannot be established.[86] Athenaeus 6.250c confirms that Eubulus' *Dionysius* dealt with the Sicilian tyrant of that name, and the surviving fragments show that the play began with a pastiche of Aeschylus (fr. 24 Kassel-Austin), included some praise of Dionysius I's character (25), and ridiculed Euripides' alleged fondness for the letter *sigma* (26). We do not know, however, to what extent the play treated—or attacked—Dionysios' policies, behaviour, or capabilities as a tragic poet. Mnesimachus' title *Philip* almost certainly referred to Philip II of Macedon; fr. 7 Kassel-Austin hints wittily at the efficiency of Philip's army, while fr. 10 names Dorion, Philip's piper and boon companion. How far plays such as these attacked or ridiculed the title figures we do not now know, but it may not be just an accident of preservation that a majority of the plays whose titles suggest major political or historical themes—the ones cited above by Anaxandrides, Eubulus, and Mnesimachus, for instance—were concerned with non-Athenians.

References to contemporary personalities, and not only to those who had made their name in politics, however, were often introduced into comedies whose main themes were apparently nonpolitical. And here, although our evidence may perhaps be unrepresentative,[87] witty

[83] See R. Hunter (1979, 124), Kassel-Austin V (1986, 207).

[84] *IG* ii^2 119; Diodorus Sic. 15.92.3, Nepos *Chabrias* 2.3, Plutarch *Agesilaus* 37.5.

[85] See especially Kassel-Austin II (1991, 258–259) and cf. Webster (1953, 40).

[86] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 151–152).

[87] Much of it comes from one source: anecdotal comments about various characters—for example, parasites, hetairai, gourmets, and gourmands—in Athenaeus.

comments on Athenians and non-Athenians alike seem to have entertained audiences throughout the period of Middle Comedy, without any notable diminution in the second half of the fourth century. All the important Athenian politicians of the time came in for their share of ridicule, even if their political beliefs were rarely criticized directly, and the thrust of the references fell mainly on incidentals and accidentals.

Demosthenes, for example, gave the comedians of his time ample opportunity for humorous disparagement in several ways. His notorious quibbling antithesis in the dispute between Athens and Macedon about sovereignty over the barren islet of Halonnesos in the Aegean Sea just north of Euboea was a case in point. In 343 BCE Philip offered this islet to Athens, but Demosthenes then countered with the claim that Halonnesos was *de jure* Athenian and not Macedonian, so that Philip had no right *to give* (δοῦναι), but only *to restore* (ἀποδοῦναι) the islet to Athens. This antithesis became a popular catchphrase at the time, and contemporary playwrights made all the comic capital they could out of it by spatchcocking echoes of the quibble into the most alien contexts. Athenaeus collects a sample of these jokes, and perhaps the most interesting instance comes from Alexis' *Stratiotes* (The soldier), in a fragment with two unidentified speakers (212 Kassel-Austin):

(A) ἀπόλαβε
τουτί. (B) τί τοῦτο δ' ἐστιν; (A) ὃ παρ' ὑμῶν ἐγὼ
παιδάριον ἔλαβον, ἀποφέρων ἥκω πάλιν.
(B) πῶς; οὐκ ἀρέσκει σοὶ τρέφειν; (A) οὐκ ἔστι γὰρ
ἡμέτερον. (B) οὐδ' ἡμέτερον. (A) ἀλλ' ἐδώκατε
ὑμεῖς ἐμοὶ τοῦτ'. (B) οὐκ ἐδώκαμεν. (A) τί δαί;
(B) ἀπεδώκαμεν. (B) τὸ μὴ προσῆκόν μοι λαβεῖν.

(A) Take
It back. (B) What is it? (A) Here, the baby that
I took from you. I've brought it back again.
(B) Why? Don't you want to bring it up? (A) It isn't ours.
(B) Not ours though, either. (A) But the two of you
Gave it to me. (B) We didn't *give* it! (A) What?
ʿB) No, we restored it. (A) What I'd no right to take?

This is a tantalizing fragment,[88] for several reasons, of which two are particularly relevant here. First, there is not much wit in this exchange; the joke depends solely on the transfer of the *giving* and *restoring* antithesis to a comically irrelevant context. Political jokes of this kind very quickly

[88] Cf. Webster (1953, 44), Nesselrath (1990a, 282n.1) and (1997, 275–276), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 605–608).

become stale, and I dare say that Alexis' *Soldier* paraded on stage a very short time after the Halonnesos incident. Secondly, the year 343 BCE was over twenty years before Menander began producing plays that sometimes featured babies who had been found abandoned and whose ownership was disputed by the finders. Once again a Middle Comedy fragment is Janus-headed, looking backwards to Old Comedy with its political joke, but looking forward to New Comedy with its pre-echo of a situation in Menander's *Epitrepontes*.[89]

Most of the references to politicians and other public figures were of this sort: mocking or making comic capital out of some personal feature, action, remark, or failing that did not constitute a vicious onslaught on character or civic activity. A brief list is appended:

Aristogiton, politician and orator (fl. ?350s–324/323 BCE). Allegedly of low social status: Alexis fr. 211 Kassel-Austin.[90]

Callimedon, politician and orator (fl. 340s–318). His squint: Alexis 117, Timocles 29. Passion for eating fish: Alexis 57, 149, 249, Antiphanes 27.5–7, 77, Eubulus 8, possibly Alexis 118.[91]

Callistratus, Agyrrhius' nephew, politician, and orator (fl. 390s–361/360). Perfumed feet: Anaxandrides 41.3. Handsome rump: Eubulus 10.1. Love of food (?): Antiphanes 293.4.[92]

Chaerephilus, a metic salt-fish dealer given Athenian citizenship (along with his sons) in the 320s; his son Phidippus was trierarch in 323. Sons' infatuation with the hetaira Pythionice: Timocles 15, cf. 16. Phidippus a fat glutton: Timocles 23.4–7. Fish nicknames: Alexis 77, Timocles 16.6.[93]

Ctesippus, Chabrias' son, politician, and orator (fl. 350s–330s). Dandyism: Timocles 5. Stones of his father's monument sold to pay for his pleasures: Diphilus 37.[94]

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[89] See also following (section 9).

[90] Cf. T. Thalheim in *RE* II 1 (1896, 931–932 s.v. Aristogeiton 2), Davies (1971, 476), E. Stein-Hölkeskamp in *DNP* 1 (1996, 1010 s.v. Aristogeiton 1), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 604–605).

[91] Cf. H. Swoboda in *RE* X 2 (1919, 1647–1648 s.v. Kallimedon 1), Webster (1953, 38, 45–46), Davies (1971, 279–280), R. Hunter's edition of *Eubulus* (1983, 95–96), my Alexis commentary (1996, 177–179), and Nesselrath (1997, 275–276).

[92] Cf. Swoboda in *RE* X 2 (1919, 1730–1735 s.v. Kallistratos 1), Webster (1953, 30, 40), Davies (1971, 277–282), Wankel (1976, 1003–1004), Funke (1980, 110 and n. 23), Nesselrath (1990a, 213–214 with n. 105, 225), and C.J. Tuplin in *OCD*[3] 278–279 s.v. Callistratus 2.

[93] Cf. J. Kirchner in *RE* III 2 (1899, 2027–2028 s.v.), A. Raubitschek in *RE* XIX 2 (1938, 1937–1938 s.v. Pheidippos 2), Webster (1953, 38–39, 46), Davies (1971, 566–568), my Alexis commentary (1996, 69–70, 211–214), and Nesselrath (1997, 282–283).

[94] Cf. E. Honigmann in *RE* XI ii (1922, 2080–2081 s.v. Ktesippos 4) and Davies (1971, 651).

Demosthenes (384–322). The Halonnesos quibble: Alexis 7, 212, Anaxilas 8, Antiphanes 167, Timocles 20.4. Alleged use of the oath μὰ τὴν Γῆν, "by the Earth": Anaxilas 8, Antiphanes 288, Timocles 41.[95]

Hyperides (389–322). Fondness for eating fish: Timocles 17 (cf. also fr. 4).[96]

Iphicrates, distinguished general (fl. 390s–350s). His wedding feast: Anaxandrides 42.3–31.[97]

Melanopus, Laches' son, politician (active ca. 345). Use of perfume: Anaxandrides 41.[98]

Misgolas, public figure (born 390, fl. 345 onwards). Sexual pursuit of young men, especially musicians: Alexis 3, Antiphanes 27.14–18, Timocles 32.[99]

Attacks on Athenian statesmen for their political views and alleged crimes or their rhetorical ability, however, are much rarer. The following examples are the most notable:

Timocles fr. 4 Kassel-Austin accuses Callisthenes, Demon, Demosthenes, Hyperides, and Moerocles of taking bribes from Harpalus in or about 324 BCE.[100]

Timocles 14, 19 and Philemon 41 by subtle wording imply that Aristomedes in the third quarter of the fourth century BCE was a thief, without actually saying so, although Timocles 19 comes very close to making an explicit accusation.[101]

Theophilus 4 calls Callimedon a ψυχρός orator, thus implying that his choice of imagery was inapposite.[102]

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[95] Cf. especially Webster (1953, 44–45), Wankel (1976, 1166–1167), my Alexis commentary (1996, 70–71, 606–607), and Nesselrath (1997, 276).

[96] Cf. Thalheim in *RE* IX 1 (1914, 281–285 s.v. Hypereides 1), Webster (1953, 46), Davies (1971, 517–520), G.L. Cawkwell in *OCD*[3] 737 s.v. Hyperides, Habicht (1997), references in index s.v., Nesselrath (1997, 277), and M. Weissenberger in *DNP* 5 (1998, 804–806).

[97] Cf. Thalheim and U. Kahrstedt in *RE* IX 2 (1914, 2019–2022 s.v. Iphikrates 1), Webster (1953, 30, 40), Davies (1971, 248–252), Tuplin in *OCD*[3] 765 s.v. Iphikrates, and H. Beck in *DNP* 5 (1998, 1098–1099).

[98] Cf. E. Obst in *RE* XV 2 (1932, 424 s.v. Melanopos 3), Webster (1953, 30, 40), Nesselrath (1990a, 213–214n105), and (1997, 273).

[99] Cf. Tod (1901/1902, 211–214), F. Geyer in *RE* XV 2 (1932, 2049 s.v.), Webster (1953, 38, 73), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 63).

[100] Cf. Badian (1961, 38, 42), Webster (1970, 47), Davies (1971, 116–118, 133–135), and Habicht (1997, 32–33). Cf., also on Moerocles, H. Berve in *RE* XV 2 (1932, 2513 s.v.), on Demon Kirchner in *RE* V (1905, 141–142 s.v. Demon 3), J. Engels in *DNP* 3 (1997, 459 s.v. Demon 2).

[101] Cf. Webster (1970, 45), Davies (1971, 65–66).

[102] On the meaning of ψυχρός here, see my Alexis commentary (1996, 549); cf. also Gaiser (1974, 66–67).

A scholiast on Aeschines 1.64 (no. 145 pp. 29–30 Dilts = Hyperides fr. 40 = fr. com. adesp. 836 Kassel-Austin) alleges that Aristophon, an Athenian politician active from the end of the fifth century to the 340s, was attacked in comedy for various crimes and misdemeanors, but the scholiast's failure to name the comedians and cite what they actually said makes it impossible to evaluate the accuracy of his allegations.[103]

The above compendium suggests that Timocles, towards the end of the Middle Comedy period, went further than most of his rivals in savaging contemporary and especially political personalities in Athens.[104]

b. *Philosophy*

Old Comedy, on the evidence primarily of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, sometimes posed as the anti-intellectual opponent of philosophy. Here Aristophanes' victims were Socrates and the Sophists. The evidence for a comparable stance in Middle Comedy is inevitably far more limited,[105] but several fragments (cited by Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus) show the same kind of ridicule directed at fourth-century movements like the Academy of Plato and the Pythagoreans. The most interesting of these victims of comic misrepresentation is Plato himself, particularly because the picture we receive of him from contemporary comic fragments is an amusingly recognizable distortion of reality.[106] Here are two snippets, the first one apparently a woman in the street's view of the philosopher, from Alexis' *Meropis* (fr. 151 Kassel-Austin):[107]

> εἰς καιρὸν ἥκεις, ὡς ἔγωγ' ἀπορουμένη,
> ἄνω κάτω τε περιπατοῦσ' ὥσπερ Πλάτων,
> σοφὸν οὐδὲν εὕρηκ', ἀλλὰ κοπιῶ τὰ σκέλη.

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[103] Cf. Webster (1953, 39–40, 45), Wankel (1984, 52–53), and Cawkwell in *OCD*[3] 165 s.v.

[104] Cf. Webster (1953, 47), Nesselrath (1990a, 200) and (1997, 275–276).

[105] It is particularly unfortunate that from the one play entitled *Platon*, in which Aristophon presumably attacked and/or ridiculed Plato throughout, only one fragment of less than three lines survives (8 Kassel-Austin), and this (in which one man—Plato? an opponent of Plato, e.g. a Pythagorist?—threatens to turn another into a scarecrow) leaves the context ambiguous so long as the main speaker cannot be certainly be identified. Cf., for example, Fenk (1913, 32), Brock (1990, 41), Imperio (1998b, 126).

[106] A bibliography of discussions about the way in which Plato was treated in contemporary comedy can be found in my Alexis commentary (1996, 6); add now Imperio (1998b, 121–129).

[107] Cf., for example, Webster (1953, 5), Brock (1990, 41), my Alexis commentary (1996, 445–447), Imperio (1998b, 127).

You've come in time, for I'm out of my depth.
Like Plato I've been walking up and down,
I've found no clever answer though—except
My legs are weary!

The other is a fragment of dialogue between a slave and his young master from Amphis' *Amphikrates* (fr. 6 Kassel-Austin):[108]

(Δουλ.) τὸ δ' ἀγαθὸν ὅ τι ποτ' ἐστίν, οὗ σὺ τυγχάνειν
μέλλεις διὰ ταύτην, ἧττον οἶδα τοῦτ' ἐγώ,
ὦ δέσποτ', ἢ τὸ Πλάτωνος ἀγαθόν. (Τροφ.) πρόσεχε δή.

(Slave) Whatever good you hope to earn through her,
I've less idea, master, than I have
Of Plato's "good." (Master) Just pay attention then.

Both snippets contain attempts to enliven everyday situations faced by ordinary people—a woman's confession of her inability to solve some problem, a slave's suggestion that his master's involvement with (doubtless) a hetaira has no merit—by inserting superficial and probably uncomprehending references to the most famous Athenian intellectual of the time. They are casual embellishments unconnected to the plot, like most other similar references in Middle Comedy.[109]

Rather different is the following extract from Ephippus fr. 14,[110] which describes one of Plato's young men about to make a speech, probably in the Athenian assembly; the play from which it derives was entitled *Nauagos* (Shipwrecked):

εὖ μὲν μαχαίρᾳ ξύστ' ἔχων τριχώματα,
εὖ δ' ὑποκαθιεὶς ἄτομα πώγωνος βάθη,
εὖ δ' ἐν πεδίλῳ πόδα τιθεὶς ὑπόξυρον
κνήμης ἱμάντων ἰσομέτροις ἑλίγμασιν,
ὄγκῳ τε χλανίδος εὖ τεθωρακισμένος,
σχῆμ' ἀξιοχρέων ἐπικαθεὶς βακτηρίᾳ …

Well cropped his ringlets by the barber's shears,
Well drooping too his beard to uncut depths,
Well set his foot with razored toe nails in
His sandal, ankles strapped in matching curves,
And fortified well in a massive cloak,
Leaning his noble figure on a staff …

[108] Cf., for example, Webster (1953, 50), my Alexis commentary (1996, 256–259), Imperio (1998b, 127).

[109] For example, Alexis frr. 1, 98, 163, 185, Amphis fr. 13, Anaxandrides fr. 20, Cratinus the younger fr. 10 Kassel-Austin.

[110] Cf., for example, Webster (1953, 51–52), Brock (1990), Imperio (1998b, 128).

Only the opening four words of the speech made by this elegant Platonist are preserved at the end of this fragment (v. 13), but he and his speech were presumably in some way linked to the plot of the play.

Epicrates fr. 10 from an unnamed play is a thirty-seven-verse-long dialogue in anapaestic dimeters,[111] where one character tells another about an event in the Academy where the students (vv. 13–17) "classifying the natural world, / catalogued living beasts, / the make-up of trees and the types of pot herbs. / Among those they then tried / to work out the true class of the gourd," while Plato himself (vv. 33–34) "very gentle and totally calm" stood by, encouraging them. Unhappily, the relation of these dimeters to the play's plot cannot be guessed.

A similar puzzle is provided by Alexis fr. 247 from his *Phaedrus*. In it an unidentified speaker (possibly but not necessarily the title figure) claims that on a journey to the centre of Athens from Piraeus, his inability to cope with his troubles set him thinking about the nature of love, which he goes on to characterize with language that appears to echo famous passages in Plato's *Symposium* (especially 202a–204b). "Phaedrus" may well have been a stock name in later Greek comedy for a young man in love,[112] and the Platonic associations in this fragment may have been no more than fashionable arabesques designed to give swagger to a typical lover's monologue about his difficulties. Alternatively, Alexis could have been inspired by Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* to portray the hero of what later became a conventional type of love intrigue as a romanticized and youthful Phaedrus, after the facts about the historical career of Plato's *Phaedrus* had been blurred by time. We just do not know.[113]

And finally, the Pythagoreans.[114] There is a group of plays (*Pythagorizousa* = *Pythagorist*[115] *girl*, by Alexis and possibly also Cratinus the younger; *Pythagoristes* = *Pythagorist man*, by Aristophon; possibly *Tarantinoi* = *Men of Tarentum*, by Alexis and Cratinus the younger) that

[111] See section 7b. On the fragment itself, cf., for example, Webster (1953, 54), Brock (1990, 41), Imperio (1998b, 125–126).

[112] Cf. Terence *Andria* 86–87.

[113] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 691–702).

[114] On Pythagorean cults in the fourth century BCE, see especially Fritz (1940), Burkert (1972), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 579–586, 624–646, with further bibliography scattered throughout). Cf. also Sanchis Llopis (1995, 67–82) and Imperio (1998b, 122–124).

[115] On the distinction between Πυθαγόρειος, Πυθαγορικός (both of which translate as Pythagorean), and Πυθαγοριστής (Pythagorist), see my Alexis commentary (1996, 581–582).

take their titles from devotees of Pythagoreanism who placed the religious side of their heritage before the scientific and philosophic and founded communities in South Italy, where the one at Tarentum apparently proved to be the most tenacious. In the plays cited above, the practices of these cults were ridiculed in a way that reminds us of the attacks on Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and elsewhere; derision was cast on Pythagorean vegetarianism and scanty meals (Alexis frr. 201, 223, Aristophon frr. 10, 12; cf. Antiphanes 225, Aristophon 9), on the fact that they drank water and not wine (Alexis 202, 223, Aristophon 10, 12), their dirtiness (Alexis 201, Aristophon 9, 10, 12), and their sullenness and vows of silence (Alexis 201). A word of warning, however, is needed against two common assumptions: that because some of the comedies named above can be dated to the period ca. 350–ca. 320 BCE, all these Pythagorean titles must necessarily belong to the same period; and that the presentation of Pythagorists as title figures in some of the listed plays necessarily means that ridicule of the cults was the only or most important element in their plots.

7. *Style and Meter*

a. *The High Style*

The most common metre of speeches and dialogue in Middle Comedy, just as in Old and New Comedy, is the iambic trimeter, but its language and style are a "poetic amalgam drawn from many linguistic areas,"[116] though verging towards the colloquial Attic of its time. Even so, one remarkable feature is the emergence of passages written in a "ludicrously circumlocutory"[117] style, where the level is raised high above the norm—particularly in descriptions of food, drink, and their containers, particularly too in speeches by cooks. Here the influence both of contemporary dithyramb—with its fondness for compound-adjective coinages well to the fore, and of recent tragedy—is clear. Two examples from different writers should suffice:

[116] R. Hunter (1983, 17).

[117] R. Hunter (1983, 19). The fullest account of the material treated in this section, however, is now Nesselrath (1990a, 241–266, the "dithyrambic element": cf. also R. Hunter [1973, 16–20, 166–171]) and my Alexis commentary (1996, index at 880 s.v. tragic or otherwise elevated language, 267–283 on anapaestic dimeters). Cf. also Imperio (1998b, 75–95).

(i) Alexis fr. 153.15–17, spoken by a cook (according to its quoter, Athenaeus 9.397a)[118]

ἑστήκαθ' ὑμεῖς, κάεται δέ μοι τὸ πῦρ,
ἤδη πυκνοὶ δ' ἄττουσιν Ἡφαίστου κύνες,
κούφως πρὸς αἴθραν …

Idle you stand, while burns my fire, and now
Hephaestus' hounds in crowds dart nimbly up
Towards the welkin …

"Hephaestus' hounds" are sparks.

(ii) Eubulus fr. 56[119]

ἄρτι μὲν μάλ' ἀνδρικὴν
τῶν θηρικλείων ὑπεραφρίζουσαν κάρα
κωθωνοχειλῆ, ψηφοπεριβομβήτριον,
μέλαιναν, εὐκύκλητον, ὀξυπύνδακα,
στιλβοῦσαν, ἀνταυγοῦσαν, ἐκνενιμμένην,
κισσῷ κάρα βρύουσαν, ἐπικαλούμενοι
εἶλκον Διός σωτῆρος …

Just now a great
And mighty Thericlean, brim bubbling over,
Laconian-rimmed, pebble-rattling-round,
Sable, well-rounded, tapered-at-the-base,
Gleaming, sparkle-reflecting, all washed clean,
Brim crammed with ivy—this they drained while
Our saviour Zeus …

Over forty such passages are preserved from Middle Comedy.[120] Sometimes the pastiche is clearly dithyrambic, with its extravagant coinages of compound adjectives (as in Eubulus fr. 56); sometimes it is designedly paratragic (as, e.g., in Antiphanes fr. 4, where the speaker claims to be imitating Sophocles). Often, however, it is difficult to pinpoint a definite source, since already in the late fifth century the lyrics of tragedy were themselves beginning to absorb dithyrambic types of ornamentation.[121]

Such pastiche is of course not confined to Middle Comedy. Aristophanes was parodying Euripides' adoption of these new lyric styles as

[118] Cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 261–262) and my Alexis commentary (1996, 450, 455–457).
[119] Cf. R. Hunter (1983, 142–144) and (on "Thericlean" vases) my Alexis commentary (1996, 66–68).
[120] Nesselrath (1990a, 254 and n. 37).
[121] Cf. especially Nesselrath (1990a, 245).

early as the *Thesmophoriazisae* (13 ff., 101–129) and the *Frogs* (1309–1363). Traces survive even into New Comedy (e.g., the iambic tetrameters of Menander *Dyskolos* 946–953).

b. *Anapaestic Dimeters*

Although the vast majority of Middle Comedy fragments are straitjacketed in iambic trimeters and trochaic tetrameters, with few examples of lyric, there remains a group of twenty,[122] including some of the longest passages preserved, written in anapaestic dimeters. Most of these seem to belong to the years before 350 BCE and to be largely distinct in structure and feel from metrically similar systems in Old Comedy. Aristophanes has forty-one passages in anapaestic dimeters. Twenty-two of these are pendants to long stretches of anapaestic tetrameters; the other nineteen divide into two groups: preludes introducing new sections of a play and laments parodying tragedy (e.g., *Clouds* 711–722, *Wasps* 750–759, *Lysistrata* 954–979).

All of the Middle Comedy examples appear to be spoken by individual actors and not by any chorus. Antiphanes fr. 91 may come from an unidentified character's announcement of the imminent arrival of the chorus at the end of a play's first act. Alexis 167 apparently combines two dramatic functions: that of a mother's paratragic lament, continuing thus an Old Comedy tradition, and that of exposition, which probably implies that it came early in the play.[123] The majority, however, are display pieces for virtuoso actors, comparable perhaps to songs in nineteenth-century operetta—like that of the major general in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. One popular subject for these Middle Comedy displays was the description of a feast, with long catalogues of the food provided (e.g., Anaxandrides 42; cf. Antiphanes 130, 131, Ephippus 12, 13, Eubulus 63), which is slightly varied in Mnesimachus 4, where a slave is ordered to go to the marketplace and announce to some guests who are undergoing cavalry drill there that an extravagant meal is now prepared for them. Epicrates 10, which is discussed above,[124] where the narrative is confined to scientific research in Plato's Academy, may accordingly be an exceptional exploitation of this meter in Middle Comedy.

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[122] Cf. especially Nesselrath (1990a, 267–280, with notes 67–72).
[123] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 479–481, 484–492).
[124] See section 6b. On Mnesimachus fr. 4, see now Gilula (1995, 143–156).

8. *Titles and Characters*

a. *Titles*

Once the myth-travesty titles[125]—which were so prominent a feature of comedy in the first half of the fourth century BCE—have been eliminated, a definite switch can be noted in the Middle Comedy period to titles of the kind that we especially associate with Menander and his rivals, titles that are more commonly masculine or feminine singulars than the plurals that in Old Comedy often (but by no means always) identify the play's chorus. These Middle Comedy titles can be classified in six groups.

(i) Many titles identify a male or female character by his/her job, profession, or typical activity. This is most conveniently established by a list of the relevant titles; it aims to be complete, but it does include undatable titles of plays by authors who straddled the periods of Old and Middle Comedy (like Plato com. and Theopompus) or Middle and New Comedy (like Alexis and Philemon), so that an occasional entry in the list may predate 404 or postdate 320 BC.

Male

Acrobatic jockey (Ἀποβάτης): Alexis, Diphilus[126]
All-in wrestler (Παγκρατιαστής): Alexis, Philemon, Theophilus[127]
Augur (Οἰωνιστής): Antiphanes
Begging priest (Ἀγύρτης): Philemon; also (Μηναγύρτης or more probably[128] Μητραγύρτης begging priest of Rhea or of Cybele) Antiphanes
Bird catcher (Ὀρνιθευτής): Nicostratus
Boxer (Πύκτης): Timocles, Timotheus
Boy firebearer (Πυρφόρος): Philemon[129]
Charioteer (Ἡνιόχος): Antiphanes
Chorus leader (Πρωτόχορος): Alexis, Antidotus
Chronicler (Ἱστοριογράφος): Dioxippus
Clay modeler (Κοροπλάθος): Antiphanes
Cobbler (Σκυτεύς): Eubulus

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[125] See section 5.
[126] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 104–105).
[127] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 508–510).
[128] Μητραγύρτης is attested by mss. FSA of Pollux 7.188 and ms. A of Athenaeus 12.553b; Μην- appears only in ms. C of Pollux, perhaps corruptly influenced by the Menandrean title Μηναγύρτης. Cf. Kassel-Austin II (1991, 394).
[129] According to Pollux 8.116, the πυρφόρος was a boy chosen to carry fire to the altars, presumably in some festival. Cf. Kassel-Austin VII (1989, 265).

Cook(s) (Μάγειρος, -οι): Nicostratus (singular), Anaxilas (plural)[130]
Cup maker (Ἐκπωματοποιός): Alexis, ?Philippides[131]
Dicers (Κυβευταί): Alexis, Amphis, Antiphanes, Eubulus
Doctor (medical: Ἰατρός): Antiphanes, Aristophon, Philemon, Theophilus
Doctor-cum-prophet (Φαρμακόμαντις): Anaxandrides
Donkey driver (Ὀναγός): Diphilus
Doorman (Θυρωρός): Philemon
Drill sergeant or Heavy-armed infantryman (Ὁπλομάχος): Anaxandrides
Druggist (Φαρμακοπώλης): Alexis, Mnesimachus[132]
Farmer (Γεωργός): ?Timocles[133]
Fuller (Κναφεύς): Antiphanes
Gardener (Κηπουρός): Antiphanes
Goatherds (Αἰπόλοι, plural): Alexis
Goldsmith (Χρυσοχόος): Anaxilas, Diphilus
?Guardian (Ἐπίτροπος): Alexis[134]
Herald (Σπονδοφόρος): Alexis
Hierophant (Ἱεροφάντης): Nicostratus
Hired labourers (Θητεύοντες): Alexis[135]
Hod carrier (Πλινθοφόρος): Diphilus
Horse breeder (Ἱπποτρόφος): Mnesimachus[136]
Horseman/men (i.e., knight(s); Ἱππεύς, -εῖς): Alexis (singular), Antiphanes (plural)
Hunters (Κυνηγέται): Anaxandrides
Isthmian victor (Ἰσθμιονίκης): Mnesimachus
Junior actor (Τριταγωνιστής): Antiphanes
Legislator (Θεσμοφόρος): Dionysius
Light-armed soldier (Πελταστής): Ephippus, Eriphus
Lyre (or perfume) maker (Λυρο- or Μυροποιός): Amnaxilas[137]
Lyre player (Κιθαριστής): Antiphanes
Lyre singer (Κιθαρῳδός): Alexis, Antiphanes, Clearchus, Diphilus, Sophilus, Theophilus (plus Anaxippus, Apollodorus, Nicon in New Comedy)

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[130] Cf. section 8bi.

[131] The *Philippides* title is supplemented from just εκπ[in a papyrus: see Kassel-Austin VII (1989, 340–341).

[132] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 312–313).

[133] Cf. Kassel-Austin VII (1989, 780, on fr. 38).

[134] An ἐπιτρόπος was probably the guardian of a male ward; cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 220).

[135] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 249).

[136] Cf. Austin II (1970, 50, on v. 15) and Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 547).

[137] Manuscripts cite the title as Λυρο- (Athenaeus 4.183a), Μυρο- (Stobaeus 4.15b.24), Λουτρο- (Pollux 7.167), and υρο- (after αναξιλα in the genitive: Athenaeus 12.548c). Cf. Kassel-Austin II (1991, 284–286).

Merchant (Ἔμπορος): Diphilus, Epicrates, Philemon (source of Plautus' *Mercator*)
Miller (Μυλωθρός): Alexis
Moneylender (Τοκιστής): Alexis, Nicostratus[138]
Orator (Ῥήτωρ): Nicostratus
Painter(s) (Ζωγράφος, -οι): Antiphanes, Diphilus (singular), Anaxandrides (plural)[139]
Parasite (Παράσιτος): Alexis, Antiphanes, Diphilus; and (Κόλαξ): Philemon (?before Menander)[140]
Pentathlete (Πένταθλος): Eubulus, Xenarchus[141]
Philosophers (Φιλόσοφοι): Philemon
Pimp (Μαστροπός): Philippides; and (Πορνοβοσκός) Eubulus, ?Anaxilas.[142] Cf. also ?Rival pimp (Ἀντιπορνοβοσκός): Dioxippus[143]
Piper (Αὐλητής): Anaxilas, Antiphanes, Philemon
Plasterer (Κονιατής): Alexis, Amphis
Poet(s) (Ποιητής, -αί): Alexis, Plato com.[144]
Poultry farmers (Ὀρνιθοκόμοι): Anaxilas
Prophets (Μάντεις): Alexis[145]
Shepherd (Προβατεύς): Antiphanes
Shipowners or Captains or Tenement landlords (Ναύκληροι): Nausicrates
Soldier (Στρατιώτης): Alexis, Antiphanes, Diphilus, Xenarchus, ?Philemon[146]
Sophists (Σοφισταί): Plato com.
Steersman (Κυβερνήτης): Alexis
Stonemason (Λιθογλύφος): Philemon
Torchbearers (Λαμπαδηφόροι): Philetaerus
Tribal cavalry commander (Φύλαρχος): Phoenicides, ?Sophilus[147]

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[138] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 654–666).

[139] The *Anaxandrides* title is given as "Ζωγράφοι or Γεωγράφοι [Geographers]" by Pollux 10.59 and solely as Γεωγράφος in the singular by the Antatticist 104.32; but see Kassel-Austin II (1991, 244–245).

[140] Cf. section 8bii.

[141] The ancient pentathlon consisted of long jump, a (roughly) two hundred-metre sprint, discus, javelin, and wrestling. Cf. R. Hunter (1983, 178) and S.J. Instone in *OCD*[3] 206 s.v. athletics.

[142] Cf. R. Hunter (1983, 179–180), Nesselrath (1990a, 324–325), and (on the *Anaxilas* title) Kassel-Austin II (1991, 292–293), Nesselrath (1990a, 324n114).

[143] See especially Geissler (1925, xviii).

[144] The titles of Alexis' and Plato's (comicus) plays are cited variously as singular Ποιητής and plural Ποιηταί, and it is uncertain whether each author wrote two plays with different titles or one play with its ending subject to scribal corruption.

[145] On the possibility, however, that this play could have been a myth travesty, see note 69 above.

[146] Cf. section 8biii.

[147] The title of Sophilus' play is cited twice as Φύλαρχος (the *Suda* σ 881, Athenaeus 3.100a) and once as Φίλαρχος (Athenaeus 3.125e): see Kassel-Austin VII (1989, 598).

Vinedresser (Ἀμπελουργός): Alexis, Amphis
?Wine producer (Οἰνοποιός): Nicostratus[148]
Well digger (Φρεωρύχος): Philyllius
Wool carders (Ξάνται): Plato com.

Female

Athletic trainer and/or Masseuse (Ἀλείπτρια): Alexis, Amphis, Antiphanes, Diphilus[149]
Basket bearer(s) (Κανηφόρος, Καλαθηφόροι): Anaxandrides (singular), Eubulus (plural)[150]
Bread carriers (Ὀβελιαφόροι): Ephippus
?Chorus leader or Chorus financer (Χορηγίς): Alexis[151]
Cup bearer (Φιαληφόρος): Anaxandrides
Dancer (Ὀρχηστρίς): Alexis
Garland sellers (Στεφανοπωλίδες): Eubulus
Hairdresser (Κουρίς): Alexis, Amphis, Antiphanes[152]
Harpist (Ψάλτρια): Dromon, Eubulus[153]
?Hunter (Κυναγίς): Philetaerus[154]
?Lady's maid (Κοσμήτρια): anon.
Lyre player (Κιθαρίστρια): Anaxandrides[155]
Miller (Μυλωθρίς): Eubulus
Needlewoman (Ἀκέστρια): Antiphanes
Nurse(s) (Τίτθη, -αι): Alexis, Eubulus
Piper (Αὐλητρίς): Alexis, Antiphanes, Diodorus
Poetess (Ποιήτρια): Alexis
Saleswomen (Καπηλίδες): Theopompus
Soldiers (Στρατιωτίδες): Theopompus
Unmarried partner (Παλλακή): Alexis; and (Παλλακίς) Diphilus
Woman fishing (Ἁλιευομένη): Antiphanes
Wool workers (Ἔριθοι): Alexis, Amphis[156]

Several things stand out in this list. One is the remarkable range and variety of occupations named, which suggests that during the Middle Comedy years, there was a conscious aim for novelty in this area. Yet title

[148] This title, however, may not have been correctly transmitted: see note 44 above.
[149] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 813–815).
[150] Cf. R. Hunter (1983, 130).
[151] It is also possible, however, that Choregis was here the personal name of a hetaira; cf. Nesselrath (1990a, 319n97) and my Alexis commentary (1996, 727–728).
[152] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 297–298).
[153] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 503).
[154] It is possible, however, that here Kynegis was a proper name: cf. Meineke I (1839, 350).
[155] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 503).
[156] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 516).

choices may be arbitrary; in ancient drama the character after whom a play is named does not always have a major or genuine role.[157] The titles that recur most frequently, however, are of two sorts: those indicating figures who were to become standard roles in the intrigues of New Comedy (cooks, pimps, soldiers), and those naming musical professions, which may partly have sprung from a consciousness that ancient comedy was always musical comedy, even though such titular musicians may well have played roles in the plot that took little or no account of their musical pretensions, as seems regularly to have happened in New Comedy.[158] Next, several of the listed titles are plurals; this may occasionally (e.g., Eubulus' *Stephanopolides*, discussed above[159]) have implied that a play was named after its chorus, but more commonly doubtless it meant simply that two characters with the same occupation figured in the plot.

Finally, however, one potential link with later developments needs to be stressed. A good number of the titles listed above either are identical with those of New Comedy or involve characters who played major or minor roles in Menandrean plots. Thus Menander wrote a *Georgos*, *Kitharistes*, and *Kolax*, and Philemon an *Emporos*, which was adapted by Plautus in his *Mercator*. Demeas in Menander's *Samia* and Pataikos in his *Perikeiromene* (cf. vv. 808 ff.) are or have been merchants. Daos is a shepherd in Menander's *Epitrepontes*, a false doctor appears in his *Aspis*,[160] a false steersman in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* (vv. 1175–1199, 1240–1353), moneylenders in Plautus' *Epidicus* and *Mostellaria*, pimps in Menander's *Kolax*, Plautus' *Curculio*, *Persa*, *Poenulus*, *Rudens*, and *Vidularia*, and Terence's *Adelphoe* and *Phormio*. Habrotonon in Menander's *Epitrepontes* was a harpist (v. 477, fr. 1), the object of Phaedria's love in Terence's *Phormio* was a lyre player (80–82), and lyre players were involved in the intrigues of Plautus' *Epidicus* (47–48) and Terence's *Eunuchus* (455–457, 985). In Plautus' Truculentus (cf. 405–406), the hairdresser who was engaged by several houses acted also as a go-between and handed a baby to a courtesan for use in a stratagem.[161]

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[157] Thus occasionally a play may take its title from a character's impersonation of someone else—for example, Plautus' *Persa*. My Alexis commentary (1996, 240, 335n1) collects some other instances.

[158] Some examples are noted in the next paragraph.

[159] See section 4.

[160] Plautus' *Menaechmi*, whose cast list includes a genuine doctor, may perhaps derive from a Middle Comedy original. See note 5 above.

[161] Three dramatically important professions—cooks, parasites, and soldiers—are dealt with separately in section 8bi–iii.

(ii) Proper names form the second group of titles. Many of these point clearly to the named character's profession—especially hetairai (Agonis, Dorkis, Isostasion, Pezonike, and Polykleia in Alexis; Malthake and Melitta in Antiphanes; Neottis in Antiphanes, Anaxilas, and Eubulus; Klepsydra and Nannion in Eubulus) and soldiers (Thrason in Alexis). Himilkon in Alexis indicates that the title character came from Carthage.[162] We may guess that a few denote divine prologues: Diphilus' *Agnoia* (Misconception) and *Heros* (Guardian spirit);[163] *Hypnos* titles by Alexis, Antiphanes, and Xenarchus; Timocles' *Lethe*; and Antiphanes' *Poiesis*.[164]

(iii) Many other comedies of the period take their name from family relationship or the status of mainly free persons. Thus we have *Adelphai* (Sisters: Antiphanes), *Adelphoi* (Brothers: Alexis, Diphilus, Philemon; cf. Plautus' *Stichus* and Terence's *Adelphoe*, based on two different *Adelphoi* plays by Menander); *Chera* (Widow: Philemon); *Didymai* (Twin sisters: Antiphanes), *Didymoi* (Twin brothers: Alexis, Anaxandrides, Antiphanes, Aristophon, Xenarchus); *Epheboi* (Ephebes: Ephippus), *Ephebos* (Ephebe: Philemon; in Menander's *Eunouchos*, the main Greek source of Terence's *Eunuchus*, Chaerea seems to have been portrayed as an ephebe[165]), *Synepheboi* (Fellow ephebes: Philemon); Epikleros (Heiress: Alexis, Antiphanes, Diodorus, Diphilus, Heniochlis; Menander's *Aspis* and Terence's *Phormio* are concerned with the marriages of heiresses); *Homoia* (Girl who was a double: Alexis, Antidotus), *Homoioi* (Male doubles: Ephippus), *Homoiai* (Female doubles), or *Homoioi*[166] (Antiphanes); *Hypobolimaios* (Changeling: Alexis, Cratinus the younger, Philemon; cf. also Menander's *Hypobolimaios*[167]); *Nothos* (Bastard: Philemon); *Paidarion* (Little boy or Baby boy: Philemon); *Syntrophoi* (Boys

[162] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 255–257).

[163] Agnoia and Heros recur as the divine prologues of Menander's *Perikeiromene* and *Heros*, respectively.

[164] See also section 9.

[165] Ephebes in Athens were free boys who between their eighteenth and twentieth years were undergoing military training. Cf. S. Hornblower and A.J.S. Spofforth in *OCD*[3] 527–528 s.v. epheboi.

[166] Plays with such titles presumably exploited the confusions arising between identical doubles, as in Plautus' *Amphitruo* and *Menaechmi*, both of which may have been based on Middle Comedy models (cf. notes 5 and 160 above).

[167] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 686–689).

brought up together: Alexis, Diphilus[168]); *Tethe* (Grandmother: Diphilus). It is likely that all the above titles indicate free males and females; *Habra* (Young home-born slave:[169] Nicostratus) is a rare exception.

(iv) A further set of titles points to the presumed characterization of a major character—for instance, *Agroikos* (Boorish fellow: Anaxilas, Antiphanes, Philemon; cf. in New Comedy Menander's homonym), *Aplestos* (Insatiable fellow, presumably describing a parasite: Diphilus), *Dyskolos* (Peevish fellow: Mnesimachus; cf. Menander's *Dyskolos*), *Mempsimoiros* (Faultfinding fellow: Antidotus), *Misoponeros* (Foe to vice: Antiphanes[170]), *Philetairos* (Loyal comrade: Alexis, Amphis, Antiphanes[171]), *Philometor* and *Philopator* (Mother's boy and Father's boy: Antiphanes).

(v) Many titles refer to an object or incident that was presumably important to the plot. A few examples may be picked out:

Aichmalotos (Prisoner of war: Alexis[172]). Menander's *Aspis* deals with the fate of one such male prisoner (cf. v. 112), and Plautus' *Captivi* with that of two; in Menander's *Misoumenos* 235 Sandbach = 636 Arnott, however, the term is applied to a female prisoner. There is no way of establishing the sex of Alexis' title figure.

Argyriou aphanismos (A loss of money: Antiphanes or Epigenes[173]). The loss could perhaps have been the result of theft (as in Plautus' *Aulularia* 700 ff.[174]) or of misfortune (as in Menander's *Perikeiromene* 804 ff.).

Daktylios (Ring: Alexis, Amphis, Timocles; cf. also Menander's homonym). In New Comedy a ring is often a major contributor to the recognition and reunion of family members separated in early life (e.g., Menander's *Epitrepontes*, *Perikeiromene*; Plautus' *Curculio*, *Vidularia*; Terence's *Heauton Timorumenos*, *Hecyra*[175]).

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[168] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 620–621).

[169] Cf. Kassel-Austin VII (1989, 75) and my paper (1997b, 101–102).

[170] Like Knemon at Menander's Dyskolos 388?

[171] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 156–157).

[172] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 80).

[173] See Athenaeus 9.409d, and cf. Kassel-Austin II (1991, 331) and V (1986, 165).

[174] Cf. also the Asteas calyx-krater in Berlin (F 3044: = PV(Ph)76 Webster-Green (1978) 136 and 76 (70) Trendall (1967b) 50; Bieber (1961) fig. 509), which portrays an old man (Charinos) trying to defend a chest that two thieves (Gymnilos and Kosi[l]os) are trying to steal while the old man's slave (Karion) looks on. This vase of ca. 350 BCE may well illustrate a scene from a contemporary or recent Attic comedy.

[175] On the use of rings as recognition tokens, cf. the references given in the index of Hähnle (1929, 143) and my Alexis commentary (1996, 154).

Encheiridion (Dagger: Philemon, Sophilus; cf. also Menander's homonym). A sword played a now mysterious role in Menander's *Misoumenos*, connected with the fate of Philoumene's brother.[176]

Epistole (Letter: Alexis) and *Epistolai* (Letters: Timocles). Letters were an important feature of confidence tricks in New Comedy (e.g., Plautus' *Bacchides*, *Curculio*, *Persa*, *Pseudolus*, *Trinummus*).

Panegyris (Festival: Philemon) and *Pannychis* (Night festival: Alexis, Eubulus). Festivals, especially those that continued to, or were entirely celebrated in, the hours of darkness, were in New Comedy often the springboard of plots in which a drunken young male reveller raped and impregnated a young free girl (e.g., Menander *Epitrepontes* 451 ff., *Samia* 38–49, *Phasma* 95 ff.). It is possible, however, that one or more of the four non-Menander titles listed here may have been the name of a hetaira.[177]

Phrear (Well: Diphilus) and *He eis to phrear* (The girl into the well: Alexis[178]). A well played an important role in Menander's *Dyskolos* (190–191, 576–599, 620 ff.; cf. also Apollodorus of Gela fr. 1).

Synapothneskontes (Men dying together: Alexis, Diphilus, Philemon; Plautus' *Commorientes* adapted Diphilus' play). It is unlikely that the title figures actually died; Chairestratos pretended to die as part of a ruse in Menander's *Aspis* (cf. v. 381), and several despairing lovers in New Comedy threatened suicide (e.g., Thrasonides in Menander's *Misoumenos* 309–310, cf. 394, and Polemon in *Perikeiromene* 504–505, cf. 977–978[179]).

(vi) A sizable group of titles identifies a non-Athenian origin of one or more characters in their casts. The plays of Menander with such titles tend to highlight the presence of non-Athenians in another city (usually Athens)[180] and occasionally also (in *Sikyonioi*, for instance) to establish Athenian citizenship for them. The following list of (probably) Middle Comedy titles is restricted to titles where the named nationality is one shared with Menander:

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[176] On the use of swords and daggers as recognition tokens, cf. the references in Hähnle (1929, 142).

[177] Cf. R. Hunter (1983, 175) and my Alexis commentary (1996, 515–517). Webster (1953, 83) notes that in some cases these titles might also have designated the name of a prologue divinity, but such a figure would only have been relevant in plays where a festival played a role of some significance to the plot.

[178] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 228–229).

[179] Cf. Katsouris (1976, 24–32, 35–36).

[180] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 120–121, 128–129, 243–244, and passim). This is not to deny, however, that some sort of cook role seems occasionally to have featured in Old Comedy and even Epicharmus (see *P. Oxy.* 2429.118 = Austin (1973) fr. 84.118).

Achaiis (Woman of Achaea: Alexis); *Achaioi* (Men of Achaea: Menander)
Boiotis (Woman of Boeotia: Antiphanes, Diphilus, Theophilus); *Boiotia* (Woman of Boeotia: Menander)
Ephesia (Woman of Ephesus: Antiphanes, ?Simylus); *Ephesios* (Man of Ephesus: Menander)
Karchedonios (Man from Carthage: Alexis, Menander)
Knidia (Woman of Cnidus: Alexis, Menander)
Leukadia (Woman from Leucas: Amphis, Alexis, Diphilus, Menander); *Leukadios* (Man from Leucas: Antiphanes)
Lokroi (Men of Locris: Alexis, Menander); *Lokrides* (Women of Locris: Anaxandrides)
Olynthia or *-ioi* or *-ios* (Woman or Men or Man of Olynthus: Alexis); *-ia* (Woman of Olynthus: Menander)
Samia (Woman from Samos: Anaxandrides, Menander)
Sikyonios (Man from Sicyon: Alexis); *-ioi* or *-ios* (Men of Sicyon: Menander)
Thettaloi (Men of Thessaly: Anaxandrides); *Thettale* (Woman of Thessaly: Menander)

One noteworthy aspect of this list is the exact coincidence of six titles between Alexis and Menander. This may of course be chance, but it could also be a further instance of links between the two poets that were alleged in antiquity and seem supported by the presence of remarkable similarities between passages in their works.[181]

b. *Three Characters*

Alongside this wide variety of apparent interest in all sorts of character—professional, moral, national—and possibly too in their technical proficiencies, the fragments of Middle Comedy themselves reveal impressive evidence of the great popularity and extended, innovatory development of a few special roles, which seem to have been maintained as established types in New Comedy but were developed further and everted by Menander. Here perhaps three may be singled out, who in their different ways can be considered to descend from and replace the βωμολόχοι—the ribald comic characters—of Old Comedy.

i. *Cooks*

"Cook" is the commonly used, but not sufficiently accurate, translation of the Greek word *mageiros*, which means something more than, and

[181] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 12–13, 26–28, along with the other passages cited in the index 876 s.v. Menander).

different from, what we today mean by "cook." The *mageiros* was the professional butcher and meat cook who could be hired—in Middle Comedy times, always as a freeman—in the marketplaces of Athens and other Greek cities in order to officiate at special meals such as the wedding breakfasts that were often a ceremonial part of the happy endings of later comedy plots. We see no traces of this role in any shape remotely analogous to that of its familiar presentation in Menander and New Comedy before about 370 BCE.[182] It seems in fact to have been during the twenty years between 370 and 350 BCE—at the heart of the period we call Middle Comedy—that the figure of the *mageiros* evolved on the comic stage and was endowed with the typical attributes that embellish the numerous cook scenes and speeches from about 370 BCE until the time of Menander and the Roman comedians who adapted (and in some cases further developed) the components. These attributes are partly formal, partly material.

Thus on his first appearance, the *mageiros* sometimes enters along with his hirer or his hirer's slave, sometimes accompanied only by a professional assistant or assistants. He is on his way from the market to his hirer's house, and he launches into a long disquisition about the meal he is going to cook or its ingredients, about his skill and his knowledge.[183] This disquisition is sometimes interrupted by or invites comments from his companion or companions. Later appearances sometimes have the *mageiros* complaining about either a lack of necessary utensils and ingredients or an absence of the guests at the time when the meal is ready to be served.[184] On occasion his remarks are elevated poetically, parodying tragedy or dithyramb.[185] The cook's tone is invariably one of conceit and contempt for all his inferiors. Some of these typical qualities are best

[182] Cf. Rankin (1907), Giannini (1960), Dohm (1964), Berthiaume (1982), and especially Nesselrath (1990a, 287–309). It is possible, however, that en embryonic form of the *mageiros* role may have emerged in myth burlesques before 370, if titles such as Aristophanes' *Aiolosikon* implied travesty of the myth of Aeolus by presenting as a *mageiros*. In New Comedy the name Sikon may have been appropriated by cooks (cf. Handley's commentary on Menander's Dyskolos [1965, 287–288]).

[183] Although the relevant comic fragments are usually cited with no information about their dramatic context, the likeliest examples are Antiphanes 55, Alexis 129, 138, and (partly quoted below) Dionysius 2 (*mageiros* and hirer); Alexis 129, 138, Dionysius 3 (*mageiros* and assistant or assistants).

[184] For instance, Alexis 180 (with the comments in my commentary [1996, 516–517]).

[185] Cf., for example, Eubulus 75 and Alexis 153.15–19, with R. Hunter's (1983) and my (1996) comments respectively ad loc. On comedy's use of the high style, see above, section 7a of this chapter.

illustrated by quotation of a passage from one such scene, full of fustian and braggadocio, written sometime after 350 BCE by Dionysius, a minor and rather second-rate Middle Comedy poet.[186] In it (fr. 2 Kassel-Austin) the *mageiros* is lecturing Simias, who has just hired him. The text printed below differs slightly from that of Kassel-Austin, as my brief apparatus indicates:

(Cook) ἂν μὲν γὰρ ἕν τις τοῦτ' ἐπιβλέψῃ μόνον,
τοὔψον ποιῆσαι κατὰ τρόπον πῶς δεῖ, τίνα
τρόπον παραθεῖναι δ' ἢ πότ' ἢ πῶς σκευάσαι
⟨ἂν⟩ μὴ προίδηται τοῦτο μηδὲ φροντίσῃ,
οὐκέτι μάγειρος, ὀψοποιὸς δ' ἐστίν. οὐ
ταὐτὸν γάρ ἐστι τοῦτο· πολὺ διήλλαχεν.
⟨οὐ γὰρ⟩ στρατηγὸς πᾶς καλεῖθ' ὃς ἂν λάβῃ
δύναμιν· ὁ μέντοι δυνάμενος κἀν πράγμασιν
ἀναστραφῆναι καὶ διαβλέψαι τί που
στρατηγός ἐστιν, ἡγεμὼν δὲ θάτερον.
οὕτως ἐφ' ἡμῶν σκευάσαι μὲν ἢ τεμεῖν
ἡδύσμαθ' ἑψῆσαί τε καὶ φυσᾶν τὸ πῦρ
ὁ τυχὼν δύναιτ' ἄν· ὀψοποιὸς οὖν μόνον
ἐστὶν ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὁ δὲ μάγειρος ἄλλο τι.
συνιδεῖν τόπον, ὥραν, τὸν καλοῦντα, τὸν πάλιν
δειπνοῦντα, πότε δεῖ καὶ τίν' ἰχθὺν ἀγοράσαι
⟨οὐ τοῦ τυχόντος⟩ …
(Simias) ἄνθρωπε, μέγας εἶ. (Cook) τουτονὶ δ', ὃν ἀρτίως
ἔφης ἔχοντα πεῖραν ἥκειν πολυτελῶν
πολλῶν τε δείπνων, ἐπιλαθέσθαι, Σιμία,
πάντων ποιήσω, θρῖον ἂν δείξω μόνον
παραθῶ ⟨τε⟩ δεῖπνον ὄζον αὔρας Ἀττικῆς

8 ⟨ἂν⟩ supplied by Edmonds. 9–10 ἐστίν. οὐ/ταὐτόν γάρ Dobree: ἐστίν· οὐ ταυτον δ' ms. A of Athenaeus 9.404f., citing this fragment (Kassel-Austin here print Schweighaeuser's conjecture ἐστι δέ·/οὐ ταὐτὸ δ'). 11 ⟨οὐ γὰρ⟩ supplied by Jacobs (Kassel-Austin print ⟨ὡς γὰρ⟩, supplied by Kock and Madvig). 21 ⟨οὐ τοῦ τυχόντος⟩ supplied by Dobree.

(Cook) If one considers just this single question:
Viz., how one should prepare the dish in style,
But doesn't first observe or ponder *how*
It should be served, or *when* or *how* be dressed—
He's not a *chef* at all, but just a cook.
They're not the same, but very different.
⟨Not⟩ everyone who takes command is called
A general, but only he who can

[186] And so, not included in my list of the major poets in section 3. On this fr. see also Dohm (1964, 95, 154–155), Giannini (1960, 162–163), Nesselrath (1990a, 305–306).

Move in a crisis and see clearly—he's
A general, the other's just got pips.
The same with us, too. Anyone at all
Can dress a dish, carve, cook the sauces, blow
The fire. That sort of fellow can be termed
Only a cook. A *chef* is something else!
⟨Not everyone⟩ can comprehend place, time,
Host, guest as well, what sort of fish to buy,
And when to do it …
(Simias) Man, you are great! (Cook) This guest you called just now
A connoisseur who's sampled many an
Expensive banquet—Simias, I'll blot
Them all out, when my soufflé's[187] once revealed,
A meal that's scented with Athenian breezes!

This passage makes the *mageiros* both garrulous and repetitive, yet it contains many of his typical attributes—gasconading conceit, contempt for inferior practitioners such as the ὀψοποιός of v. 9 (who was basically a cook of fish, not meat[188]), and an arrogant assumption that cookery was an art analogous to and on the level of more highly valued skills such as military leadership. These attributes persisted into and through New Comedy.

ii. *Parasites*[189]

As characters in ancient comedy, parasites go back to Epicharmus (frr. 34–36 Kaibel) in Sicily, to the chorus who provided the title of Eupolis' *Kolakes* (fr. 172), and to Theopompus (fr. 35), but their transformation into one of the standard roles in New Comedy plots appears again to be—as with the *mageiroi*—a development of the Middle Comedy period, when their main characteristics were redefined and lovingly described. Relative poverty and a love of eating turned the parasite into a gourmand who delighted in gorging his food,[190] whether as an invited or uninvited guest, at other people's expense.[191] Accordingly, he

[187] This translates θρῖον, which in Dionysius' time was still a dish of cooked meat, fish, eggs, and/or vegetables wrapped in a fig leaf. See my Alexis commentary (1996, 528).

[188] Cf. my Alexis commentary (1996, 313, 413–414).

[189] Cf. Ribbeck (1884), Handley's commentary on Menander Dyskolos (1965, 57 ff.), my paper (1968, 161–168) and Alexis commentary (1996, 542–545), and Nesselrath (1985, 102–106, with n. 314) and (1990, 309–317), challenging some of the views expressed here.

[190] Cf., for example, Antiphanes 87, 253, Alexis 183, 263, with Nesselrath (1990a, 311).

[191] Cf., for example, Antiphanes 193, 252, Amphis 39, Eubulus 72, with R. Hunter's Eubulus commentary (1983, ad loc.).

would seek to attach himself to some rich patron,[192] often a braggart soldier,[193] and he would then provide his board in return for all manner of services, legal and illegal.[194] By the time of New Comedy, as we see from Menander and the Roman stage, these services included perjury and personation.[195] Doubtless this pattern of dependencies and duties was mainly the brainchild of Middle Comedy, but the surviving fragments of this period allow only a limited perspective on these developments, although occasionally they shed a flicker of light on some fascinating details.

One of these is the name παράσιτος (parasite) itself, which has become the accepted term for the role in most European languages. In the fifth century BCE, however, the word normally used for both the dramatic character and a real-life parasite was κόλαξ, while παράσιτος was at that time a term applied in certain cults—such as that of Heracles at Cynosarges just outside the city walls of Athens[196]—to a man who received free board in return for the performance of certain sacred duties. The term παράσιτος seems to have replaced κόλαξ in more general use for "parasite" as the result of a happy notion by Alexis in the first half of the fourth century, when the comic poet made Παράσιτος the nickname of a character who in common parlance was still being called a κόλαξ. This is made clear in a fragment (183.1–2) extant from the play, to which Alexis gave the title *Parasitos*, after his character's nickname:

> καλοῦσι δ' αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ νεώτεροι
> Παράσιτον ὑποκόρισμα· τῷ δ' οὐδὲν μέλει.
>
> And all the younger set give him the pet
> Name "Parasitos." He doesn't care one jot!

This habit of giving parasites a nickname was standardized into a comic formula: Antiphanes 193.10–11 thought up Σκηπτός (Thunderbolt), Anaxippus 3 Κεραυνός (another word meaning Thunderbolt), Plautus

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[192] Cf., for example, Alexis 121, 205, with my Alexis commentary (1996, ad loc.), and Eubulus 114.

[193] Cf., for example, Menander's *Kolax*, *Sikyonioi*, Plautus' *Bacchides*, *Curculio, Miles Gloriosus*, Terence's *Eunuchus*.

[194] Cf., for example, Antiphanes 193, Aristophon 5, Timocles 8.

[195] The titular hero of Terence's *Phormio*, based on Apollodorus' *Epidikazomenos* (The claimant), commits perjury, while the parasite in Plautus' *Persa* pretends to be a Persian. On the Greek original of the *Persa*, see n. 5 above.

[196] On this cult see especially Woodford (1971, 215–216 and n. 42), and on its site (southeast Athens, outside the Diomeian Gate), Travlos (1971, 160, 168–169), Traill (1986, 128 and n. 18).

Captivi 79–80 *Scortum* (Strumpet), and *Menaechmi* 79–80 *Peniculus* (Brush). Such nicknames highlighted aspects of a parasite's life by a vivid image, and it seems likely that when Alexis hit upon the name Parasitos, *correctly* given an initial capital, he symbolized his character's love of food so appropriately with this soubriquet taken from the world of religious ritual that it first accompanied and soon largely replaced *kolax* as the word in everyday use.[197]

iii. *Soldiers*[198]

The development of the character most often associated with the parasite as his patron in Greek and Roman comedy—the mercenary soldier—may well have run parallel to that of the cook and the parasite. It is true that real-life soldiers were sometimes presented on stage in Old Comedy—Lamachus in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* is the obvious example[199]—and that their speech was at times tragically bombastic. Yet the typical soldier of Greek New Comedy and the Roman adaptations is of a different, though related, breed. He is an inveterate traveller, serving as a mercenary in wars over all the then-known world, boasting incessantly about his martial and sexual prowess, but normally in the end being defeated or cheated by a young civilian rival for his girlfriend's affection. The historical reality behind such soldiers was not the citizen body of fifth-century Athens fighting for its existence against a threatening Sparta, but Greek mercenary captains operating outside or on the borders of the Greek world from about the 360s BCE.

Traces of the new type of soldier can be detected in Middle Comedy from the 350s onwards, but evidence for their dramatic activity is much less abundant in the next thirty years or so than it is for parasites and cooks. Shadowy examples emerge from Ephippus' *Peltastes* (Light-armed soldier) and *Geryones*,[200] Antiphanes' *Stratiotes* (Soldier), and Alexis'

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[197] When Carystius of Pergamum (cited by Athenaeus 6.235e) alleges that τὸν … νῦν λεγόμενον παράσιτον … εὑρεθῆναι … ὑπὸ πρώτου Ἀλέξιδος (the character now called "parasite" was invented by Alexis), he is presumably basing his claim on the play title. It does not necessarily mean that Alexis was the one and only initiator of this word's new application; Alexis could have heard someone else thus employing the word and simply popularized the new use by transmitting it to a large theatre audience.

[198] Cf. Ribbeck (1882, 1–90), Wehrli (1936, 101–113), Webster (1953, 64), MacCary (1972, 279–298), Hofmann and Wartenberg (1973, 7–82), Nesselrath (1990a, 325–329), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 36, 249–250).

[199] Cf. now especially MacDowell (1995, 67–71).

[200] Geryones or Geryon was a giant whose cattle were rustled by Heracles as his tenth labour; this implies that Ephippus' play was primarily a myth travesty.

Stratiotes and undated *Eisoikizomenos* (Man moving in). From the two Ephippus plays, fragments 19 and 5, written in anapaestic dimeters,[201] are descriptions by a third person of the titular light-armed soldier and a Macedonian general (fr. 5.20) respectively, foreshadowing the type of exaggeration and Münchausen-like fantasies that New Comedy soldiers habitually mouth.[202] Fragment 200 from Antiphanes' *Stratiotes* has the title figure himself describing a ridiculously exotic method of creating a breeze on hot summer days in a Cypriot royal palace.[203] Fragment 63 from Alexis' *Eisoikizomenos* is another soldier's account of a similar extravaganza in another palace, and it seems likely that this soldier is the "man moving in" of the title, since New-Comedy soldiers habitually move into a new house or lodgings just before the events of the plot get under way.[204] From Alexis' *Stratiotes*, which can be dated to the late 340s BCE,[205] comes fragment 212, in which the ownership of a (?foundling) baby is disputed. Here, at any rate, a Middle-Comedy soldier seems to be linked with a plot containing elements that to some extent prefigure the situation in the arbitration scene of Menander's *Epitrepontes*.[206]

9. *Looking to New Comedy*

There remains one further crucial question that has been aired thoroughly in recent years, particularly by scholars such as Wehrli, Webster, Nesselrath, and myself.[207] How did the New Comedy patterns of plot—with fixed character types that could be modified in each play, frequently repeated motifs, and an emphasis on intrigue and love affairs—develop out of the Old Comedy matrices, apparently so different in plot, attitudes, and structure? In presenting his answer to this question, Wehrli claimed that many seeds of New Comedy intrigue and character presentation had

[201] See section 7b above.

[202] Cf. Webster (1953, 40–42), Nesselrath (1990a, 218–219, 326–327).

[203] Cf. Webster (1953, 39, 64), Nesselrath (1990a, 327).

[204] Cf. Webster (1953, 64), Nesselrath (1990a, 327–328), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 188–192). The soldiers in Menander's *Misoumenos*, *Perikeiromene*, Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, and Terence's *Eunuchus* all moved into new accommodation shortly before the dramatic action started.

[205] See section 6a.

[206] Cf. Webster (1953, 64), Nesselrath (1990a, 328), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 605–608).

[207] Wehrli (1936), Webster (1953), Nesselrath (1990a, listing the relevant passages in his index 389 s.v. *Neue Komödie: Vorwegnahme typischer Elemente in der Mese*), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 21–24 and passim).

already germinated in fifth-century Old Comedy. The braggart soldier, for example, was related (but perhaps not closely[208]) to Aristophanes' Lamachus. The typical endings of New Comedy, with revelling and/or a procession, were foreshadowed in plays such as Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Birds*. Hetairai were already common characters in the plays of Crates and Pherecrates, fifth-century contemporaries of Aristophanes.

Wehrli's thesis was a welcome corrective to those scholars who erred by flying to another extreme and assuming that New Comedy's main debt was owed to Euripidean tragedy. If we had more information, we could be more certain of the truth, but I believe that this truth would prove to be more complex and convoluted than scholars are generally willing to concede. The seeds of New Comedy grew in many fields: Old Comedy and the plays of Euripides certainly, the characterological studies of Peripatetic philosophy perhaps, and perhaps also mime and Sicilian comedy. But one important source is too often curiously neglected: the inventions of Middle Comedy dramatists themselves. Their contributions appear to me all-important. The first identifiable New Comedy type of play was hatched out of its egg during the period of Middle Comedy, perhaps shortly before or after the middle of the fourth century. That play and its hatcher cannot now be safely identified, although we possess a few cryptic clues that unfortunately point in different directions.

(i) The first clue names Aristophanes. An ancient or Byzantine life of the comedian, attached to manuscripts V and E of the transmission,[209] contains the statement (lines 49–51) that Aristophanes ἔγραψε κωμῳδίαν τινὰ Κώκαλον, ἐν ᾧ εἰσάγει φθορὰν καὶ ἀναγνωρισμὸν καὶ τἄλλα πάντα ἃ ἐζήλωσε Μένανδρος, "wrote a comedy called *Kokalos*, in which he introduces rape and a recognition and all the other things which Menander emulated." The accuracy of such statements in such lives is quite often open to question, but there is perhaps less reason to challenge a carefully worded one like this, provided that its message is interpreted with equal care.

The title and fragments of Aristophanes' *Kokalos* contain nothing to counter the general view that it was a myth burlesque dealing with the legend of Minos' death at the hands of the daughters of Cocalus when Minos visited him at Camicus in Sicily when searching for Daedalus.

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[208] See section 8iii.

[209] The best text is printed by Kassel-Austin III 2 (1984, 1–3). Cf. Lefkowitz (1981, 105–116, discussion, and 169–172, English translation).

Cocalus' daughters apparently killed Minos by pouring boiling water or pitch over him in his bath.[210] Sophocles' *Kamikoi* (Men of Camicus) dealt with the same story,[211] but how far (if at all) Aristophanes' comedy—which was staged in 387 BCE—parodied Sophocles' tragedy is unknown. Although none of the versions of the myth known to us mentions any rape, recognition, or love affair, an inventive comic poet would not have found it difficult to introduce such things into a legend where young women played a leading part. The obvious conclusion would be that the elements singled out in the ancient life were included in Aristophanes' myth travesty and that Menander's emulation went only so far as transferring such details into stories of contemporary ordinary life like his *Epitrepontes*, *Misoumenos*, *Samia*, and *Sikyonioi*.

(ii) The *Suda*'s entry for Anaxandrides (α 1982) ends with an assertion that seems at first sight to contradict the Aristophanes life: καὶ πρῶτος οὗτος ἔρωτας καὶ παρθένων φθορὰς εἰσήγαγεν, "and he [sc. Anaxandrides] was the first to introduce love affairs and rapes of virgins." This claim, however, becomes less controversial if it is interpreted as preserving a garbled memory of a tradition that Anaxandrides was the first comic writer to use love affairs and rapes as incidents affecting ordinary people in a non-mythological plot.[212] Anaxandrides' career may have extended from the 380s to the early 340s BCE,[213] but we have no evidence that would help us to identify or date any of this poet's titles as the source of the *Suda* remark. The possibilities include *Thesauros* (Treasure: fr. 19 from this play refers to the marriage hymn that was a traditional feature of New Comedy endings[214]) and several other titles that would not be out of place in New Comedy.[215]

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[210] Cf. Frazer's edition (1921) of the epitome of Apollodorus 1.16 and his n. 1 on 142–143 (volume II).

[211] Cf. Pearson II (1917, 3–8) and Lloyd-Jones (1996, 178–181).

[212] This interpretation of the *Suda* entry, which is found, for example, in Webster (1953. 70), appears to me far more plausible than that advanced by Nesselrath (1990a, 198n29), where he suggests that the two differing statements in the Aristophanes *Life* and the *Suda* were contradictory claims put forward by opposing factions in Hellenistic scholarship.

[213] See section 3.

[214] In this fragment the (?young) man's remark that he was piping the marriage hymn is remarkably parallel to what Moschion says in Menander *Samia* 123–124, cf. 449.

[215] For example, *Agroikoi* (Boorish fellows), *Aischra* (Ugly or Wicked woman), *Amprakiotis* (Ambracian girl), *Anteros* (Love returned or Rival love), *Didymoi* (Twin brothers), *Eusebeis* (Pious people), *Hoplomachos* (Drill sergeant or Heavy-armed infantryman), *Hybris* (Wanton violence), *Kanephoros* (Basket bearer), *Kitharistes* (Lyre player),

(iii) Glimpses of plots that seem to resemble New Comedy types can be obtained from a few titles and fragments of plays produced in the late 340s or early 330s. One of these was Alexis' Ἀγωνὶς ἢ Ἱππίσκος (Agonis or Head scarf/Little wrap/Little horse).[216] Agonis was a woman's name, in this play probably that of a hetaira. The play's alternative title is of disputed meaning; Pollux 7.58 defines ἱππίσκος as a small cloak, Hesychius s.v. calls it a head cover or a piece of female jewellery (presumably in the shape of a little horse). A plausible function for it, whether garment or ornament, would be as a recognition token.

Of the fragments preserved from this play, 2 Kassel-Austin supplies most information. In it there are two speakers, identified by its citer (Athenaeus 6.230b–c and 11.502 f.–503a) as a young man in love (A) and his beloved (B); my text here is based on that in Kassel-Austin, but with two differences listed directly below the Greek:

(A) ἀπήντων τῷ ξένῳ·
εἰς τὴν κατάλυσιν ἦγον· ἦν αἴθων ἀνήρ.
τοῖς παισί τ' εἶπα—δύο γὰρ ἦγον οἰκόθεν -
τἀκπώματ' εἰς τὸ φανερὸν ἐκλελιτρωμένα
θεῖναι· κύαθος δ' ἦν ἀργυροῦς …
ἦγεν δύο δραχμάς, κυμβίον δέ τέτταρας
ἴσως ἑτέρας, ψυκτηρίδιον δὲ δέκ' ὀβολούς,
Φιλιππίδου λεπτότερον. (B) ἀλλά ταῦθ' ὅλως
πρὸς ἀλαζονείαν οὐ κακῶς νενοημέν' ἦν.

2 ἦγον· ἦν conjectured by Meineke: ησονην ms. A of Athenaeus 502 f., printed uncorrected by Kassel-Austin. 6 After ἀργυροῦς ms. A at Athenaeus 230b and 502 f. has τἀκπώματα, deleted here by Kaibel as a gloss that replaced Alexis' original words.

(A) I met the foreigner,
And brought him to the lodging. He was fiery!
I told the lads—I'd brought a couple from home—
To place the caps when polished in full view.
There was a silver ladle …

Kynegetai (Hunters), *Lokrides* (Women of Locris), *Pharmakomantis* (Doctor-cum-prophet), *Phialephoros* (Cup bearer), *Samia* (Woman from Samos), *Thettaloi* (Men of Thessaly), *Zographoi* (Painters)—and doubtless other titles now lost.

[216] On these alternative titles and other matters discussed here, see my Alexis commentary (1996, 51–70). This play can be roughly dated by (1) its reference to the homosexual Misgolas in fr. 3 (Misgolas was attacked by Aeschines in his speech against Timarchus of 345 BCE, but his notoriety may have covered several years before and after that) and (2) its parody of Euripides *Orestes* 255–256 in the same fragment (a new production of this tragedy in 340 BCE might have refreshed memories of its text in the audience, making a reference to it in the early 330s more topical).

It weighed two drachmas, then a cup four more
Perhaps, the small wine-cooler weighed ten obols,
Thinner than Philippides![217] (B) But this was not
At all ill-planned for an imposture, no!

On the analogy of known intrigue plays in Roman and Greek New Comedy, it seems likely that the girl whom the young man loved was the hetaira Agonis, here applauding her lover's scheme to take a "fiery" man to his lodging, where he had some silver plate (of surprising lightness!) to put on show as part of an imposture or confidence trick. Here, at any rate, we can see several ingredients of typical New Comedy intrigues: a young man in love, a hetaira, a fiery foreigner,[218] and a confidence trick. We cannot be absolutely certain that the fiery man was the intended victim of that trick, and perhaps we ought not even to speculate whether he might have been a soldier and a rival for Agonis' favours, or in what way the young man's display of miniature silverware was intended to help him. What is clear, however, is that Alexis' Agonis was produced almost twenty years before Menander embarked upon his career.

Other fragments of other plays produced about the same time as the *Agonis* shed an occasional shaft of light illuminating further precursors of New Comedy plotting. Fragment 212 from Alexis' *Stratiotes*, dating to around 340 BCE and highlighting a dispute about the legal ownership of a baby, has been treated above,[219] and the much discussed fragment 189[220] from Antiphanes' *Poiesis* (*Poetry* or *Composition*), perhaps forming part of its prologue, attractively illustrates its author's awareness of the difficulties facing a comic poet who had to reinvent both plot and characters for each of his plays; my texts of it here again are based on that in Kassel-Austin, but with the differences listed directly below the Greek:

μακάριόν ἐστιν ἡ τραγῳδία
ποίημα κατὰ πάντ', εἴ γε πρῶτον οἱ λόγοι
ὑπὸ τῶν θεατῶν εἰσιν ἐγνωρισμένοι,
πρὶν καί τιν' εἰπεῖν· ὥσθ' ὑπομνῆσαι μόνον
δεῖ τὸν ποιητήν. Οἰδίπουν γὰρ ⟨ἄν γε⟩ φῶ,
ἅπαντα τἄλλ' ἴσασιν· ὁ πατὴρ Λάιος,
μητὴρ Ἰοκάστη, θυγατέρες, παῖδες τίνες,

[217] Philippides was a very thin fourth-century politician with a probable life span of ca. 370–ca. 310. See P. Treves in *RE* XIX 2 (1938), 2198–2119 s.v. 1, Webster (1953, 45), and my Alexis commentary (1996, 60–61).

[218] That is, if "foreigner" rather than "guest" is the correct translation of ξένῳ in v. 1!

[219] See sections 6a and 8iii.

[220] Some recent discussions are cited by Kassel-Austin II (1991, 419); see also Webster (1953, 56, 58), Nesselrath (1990a, 240–241), and N.W. Slater (1995, 37–39).

τί πείσεθ' οὗτος, τί πεποίηκεν. ἂν πάλιν
εἴπῃ τις Ἀλκμέωνα, καὶ τὰ παιδία
πάντ' εὐθὺς εἴρηχ', ὅτι μανεὶς ἀπέκτονε
τὴν μητέρ', ἀγανακτῶν δ' Ἄδραστος εὐθέως
ἥξει, πάλιν τ' ἄπεισι …
⟨ἔπει⟩θ' ὅταν μηθὲν δύνωντ' εἰπεῖν ἔτι,
κομιδῇ δ' ἀπειρήκωσιν ἐν τοῖς δράμασιν,
αἴρουσιν ὥσπερ δάκτυλον τὴν μηχανήν,
καὶ τοῖς θεωμένοισιν ἀποχρώντως ἔχει.
ἡμῖν δὲ ταῦτ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα δεῖ
εὑρεῖν, ὀνόματα καινά, ⟨καινὰ πράγματα⟩,
⟨καινοὺς λόγους,⟩ κἄπειτα τὰ διακείμενα
πρότερον, τὰ νῦν παρόντα, τὴν καταστροφήν,
τὴν εἰσβολήν. ἂν ἕν τι τούτων παραλίπῃ
Χρέμης τις ἢ Φείδων τις, ἐκσυρίττεται·
Πηλεῖ δὲ ταῦτ' ἔξεστι καὶ Τεύκρῳ ποιεῖν.

5 ⟨ἄν γε⟩ supplied by Musurus. 6 Tentatively corrected by Arnott: τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντ' mss. ACE of Athenaeus 6.222b, citing the fragment. 12 There is a lacuna here in ms. A, and this part of the passage is omitted by mss. CE. 18–19 ⟨καινὰ πράγματα,/ καινοὺς λόγους,⟩ added *exempli gratia* by Kaibel. 19 διακείμενα Richards: διωκειμένα mss. ACE. 23 ταῦτ' ms. A: πάντ' (Ellebodius' conjecture) printed by Kassel-Austin.

Tragedy is blest
In every way, since first its stories are
Known by the audience even before
An actor speaks. The writer's only got
To jog the memory. Name Oedipus—
And all the rest's familiar—father Laïus,
Mother Jocasta, who the daughters and
The sons are, what he'll suffer, what he's done.
Again, just say Alcmaeon. That at once
Means all the children, how when mad he's killed
His mother, and Adrastus will appear
Straightway in anger, and then leave again[221] …
⟨Then⟩, when they can't move on the story, and
They're absolutely stuck about the action,
Capriciously they introduce a god.
That satisfies the audience. But this
Won't do for us. We must invent the lot—

[221] Alcmaeon killed his mother Eriphyle after she sent his father Amphiaraus rather than Adrastus to his death as one of the seven generals attacking the regime of Eteocles in Thebes. After the murder, Alcmaeon became mad and was pursued by the Furies. In Sophocles' lost *Epigonoi* (The afterborn) there was a scene in which Alcmaeon and Adrastus wrangled (fr. 187 Radt [1987, 183–184]). See Pearson I (1917, 129–139) and Lloyd-Jones (1996, 72–77).

Fresh names, ⟨fresh plot, fresh speeches⟩, and
Then all the previous story, the events
Now on the stage, the opening and
Denouement. If a Pheidon or a Chremes
Leaves out just one of these, he's booed off stage.
Peleus and Teucer,[222] though, can get away with that!

10. *Envoi*

Continuity, transformation, variety, and inventive and innovative development: these are the keywords that help to unlock a few of the mysterious doors of Middle Comedy. Over eight hundred plays were written during this period,[223] but all except two have vanished into oblivion. Accordingly, many of the riddles and mysteries are likely to remain dark forever. This the interested student must necessarily regret, although I suspect that her or his sadness will not be shared by ordinary readers of the ancient classics. Perhaps Middle Comedy, after the death of Aristophanes, created no deathless masterpieces. Perhaps between the peaks of Aristophanes and Menander lay a literary wasteland. In that case the loss of its plays is, in the words of Sir Walter Scott, "a lamentable proof of the great truth, that in the fine arts mediocrity is not permitted."[224] But if none of the writers of Middle Comedy had not constructed the ladder, how would Menander have been able to reach the very top?

[222] Antiphanes here contrasts typical names given to comic characters at all periods with those of typical tragic heroes. Pheidon was the name of Strepsiades' father in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, and perhaps the title of an Alexis play (see my commentary [1996, 705–706]); cf. also Mnesimachus 4.7. Chremes is an old man in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* and Terence's *Andria*, *Heauton Timorumenos*, and *Phormio*, a young man in *Eunuchus*; cf. Alciphron 4.2.5, Aelian *Epist*. 19, Horace *Epode* 1.33–34, *Satire* 1.40. In extant tragedy Peleus appears in Euripides' *Andromache*, Teucer in Sophocles' *Ajax*, and Euripides' *Helen*; Sophocles and Euripides both wrote a *Peleus*, Sophocles and Ion a *Teukros*.

[223] See n. 4 above.

[224] In the first chapter of *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

CHAPTER NINE

NEW COMEDY

Stanley Ireland

Though New Comedy is arguably the most derivative of ancient drama, descended directly from that of fifth-century Athens but influenced by a host of different literary and social factors, it is also the form that has stood the test of time beyond all others, extending not only into the culture of ancient Rome but also from there into Renaissance Europe and even the present day as the ancestor of the sitcom.[1] The cause of such wide applicability is without doubt the universality of the themes that formed the basis of its plots, no longer the politico-topical subjects that had entertained the audiences of Athens in the period of extreme democracy a century before, but social comedy centred upon the emotional tribulations that might beset individuals and families: adolescent love affairs, ruptures in marital relations, conflicts spawned by the generation gap, the problems arising from unknown or uncertain legal status. All these are the very basis of New Comedy, which began, if a date can indeed be given, in the 320s BCE, with the first plays of the genre's most celebrated exponent, Menander.

The fact that New Comedy plots were drawn so consistently from a small pool of thematic material is a strong indication that this was a genre that placed little emphasis upon wide-ranging originality or novelty for its major effect.[2] Instead, what we see, and no doubt what the audiences of the time expected and demanded, is variation within a set of conventions that embraced not only the story lines developed but also the characters involved and the technical aspects of production as

[1] On the debt of later comedy to antiquity, see Duckworth (1952, 396–433).

[2] Note, though, the complaint made by Antiphanes in his *Poiesis* (fr. 189 Kassel-Austin) that while the writer of tragedy could rely upon the audience's knowledge of myths to help establish the plot, poets of comedy were obliged to invent everything. See further Arnott's chapter in this volume ("Middle Comedy" section 9, "Looking to New Comedy", above).

well.[3] Such conventionality indeed is but a smaller-scale manifestation of that which underpinned the whole genre: the expectation of a happy ending. What was important, therefore, was not the end result, since this was predictable, but how that end result would be achieved and how the obstacles to it would be overcome.

1. *Parameters of Knowledge*

The division of ancient comedy into Old, Middle, and New periods has its roots in antiquity,[4] when it served as a convenient means of associating together in terms of chronology and shared technique a whole spectrum of playwrights. Its use today, in contrast, while fulfilling that same function in terms of chronology, is nevertheless a more artificial device, and one that creates a number of potential problems for students of the genre. The first of these we might call the problem of scale. In contrast to the great continuum of dramatic production available in antiquity, what survives to the present day consists, at best, of no more than a few islands of evidence, isolated mountain peaks that must serve as representatives of a vast terrain now either totally submerged by the eroding effects of time or vaguely glimpsed here and there as scattered fragments. Of Old Comedy only Aristophanes provides us with intact plays. For Middle Comedy we are largely dependent upon that playwright's last two extant works to put flesh onto the meagre skeleton of decades of production,[5] together with a collection of fragments that, as Arnott observes in the previous chapter (section 2, "Methodology"), are largely without context and were chosen for citation in the ancient sources in order to illustrate topics that

[3] This aspect of New Comedy is well brought out by Zagagi (1994, 15–45). The conventionality of plots is also commented upon by the Roman playwright Terence at *Andria* 9–12: "Menander wrote an *Andria* and a *Perinthia*. Know one and you know them both, They don't differ in their plots but in their dialogue and style".

[4] See, for instance, Kaibel (1899, I), Anonymus *De Comoedia* 2 ("There have been three phases of comedy, old, new and middle"), Platonius *Peri Diaphoras Komodion* 13 ("In old comedy they made the masks look like the characters being depicted … In middle and new comedy they deliberately made the masks more grotesque …"), *Tractatus Coislinianus* 10. It is clear, however, that references to the tripartite division could be chronologically fluid, with different authors using the same term to refer to quite different periods; see below, n. 11, and Nesselrath (1990a, 149–161).

[5] In the case of *Eccleziazusae* and *Plutus*, we cannot even be certain that they are representative of Middle Comedy as a whole.

may have little connection with the genre as a whole.[6] For New Comedy Menander stands as the lone surviving representative of more than sixty playwrights, a figure whose extant works are but the chance survivors of a total corpus that originally must have numbered several hundred (Damen 1985, 5 cites 391 titles).

Such partial evidence presents us with the very real danger of viewing those developments that undoubtedly did take place within comedy as sudden revolutionary shifts rather than the products of a far more gradual evolution.[7] Evidence for a gradual process comes from those ancient writers who refer to the ancestry of features and techniques usually regarded as typical of New Comedy. So, for instance, Satyrus in his biography of Euripides[8] writes, "The conflict of husband and wife, father and son, servant and master, or those things to do with changes of fortune, violations of virgins, suppositious children, recognitions through rings and necklaces: this is the stuff of New Comedy, which Euripides brought to a peak". A similar claim we find in the Life of Aristophanes: "He wrote a *Kokalos* in which he introduced the theme of violations and recognition and the other things that Menander imitated".[9] If anything, it is clear that many of the features and characters we normally associate with New Comedy were already in place decades before the traditional opening date for the genre. What changed perhaps was no more than a shift of emphasis.[10] That this was probably the case is suggested by a related problem, the understandable tendency to view the three periods of New Comedy as mutually exclusive and to pigeonhole playwrights into one or another. Yet the career of Aristophanes shows the dangers inherent in such an approach, in that while most of his work sets the standard for what we regard as Old Comedy, his final two plays point forward to something quite different in terms of structure and content. Similarly, Alexis,

[6] The caveat is especially relevant to the writings of Athenaeus, whose *Deipnosphistae* (Table talk) could be virtually guaranteed to cite a preponderance of material connected with food (Damen 1985, 3) and has led to probably erroneous conclusions about the general style of those playwrights (like Diphilus) whose extant fragments come principally from this source.

[7] Blume (1990, 20).

[8] *P. Oxy*. 1176 fr. 39. Cf. Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* X i.69, "As he often testifies, Menander greatly admired Euripides and even imitated him, though they worked in different genres".

[9] *testimonium* 1.50 Kassel-Austin. A similar claim is made for the Middle Comedy comic poet Anaxandrides, *Suda* a 1982 = *testimonium*1 Kassel-Austin: "He was the first to introduce love affairs and the violation of virgins".

[10] See Arnott's discussion in the previous chapter, section 9.

a major figure in the Middle period, survived far into the New Comedy period, while Philemon is described variously as a writer of both Middle and New comic styles.[11]

Until the present century, virtually nothing was known directly of original Greek New Comedy plays apart from what could be gleaned from fragments quoted by writers like Athenaeus,[12] a collection of aphorisms attributed to Menander[13] (many of them doubtless spurious), and statements made by a variety of ancient authors evaluating this or that playwright.[14] As a result there was an inevitable tendency to attribute to those scraps of Greek that had survived an importance and significance that subsequent discoveries have shown to be quite unjustified. As Arnott has indicated in the case of Middle Comedy, the analysis of ancient material by modern scholars all too often failed to take account of the potential divergence between the original dramatic function of lines and passages and their later use as illustrations of the playwright's style and technique. The usual absence of any context for the fragments cited raised the additional danger of altogether false interpretation, which becomes only too evident in those cases where glimmerings of context do exist. Take, for instance, the famous aphorism from Menander's *Dis Exapaton* cited by Stobaeus (*Eclogae* IV 52, 27 = fr. 111 Körte-Thierfelder): "Those whom the gods love, die young". The play was later adapted by the Roman playwright Plautus as *Bacchides*, but as *Bacchides* 816 ff. shows, the line was not a sigh of regret at the death of the young so much as a jibe by the slave Chrysalus aimed at the old man Nicobulus and carrying with it the barbed suggestion that he had lived too long. Nor did the danger of overoptimistic interpretation end when the more substantial remains began to make their appearance in the present century. The restoration of story lines from what were initially partial remains[15] and the almost

[11] Thus Apuleius *Florida* 16.6 sees him as a Middle Comic writer, while the Anonymus *De Comoedia* 15 and the *Suda* φ 327 (*testimonium* 1 Kassel-Austin) set him within New Comedy.

[12] A useful discussion of the interplay between recent discoveries and the "book" fragments is given by Handley (1990, 123–148).

[13] Jäkel (1964).

[14] The most famous is Plutarch's epitomised comparison of Aristophanes and Menander at *Moralia* 853–854.

[15] See, for instance, Herzog's 1916 restoration of the plot of Menander's *Aspis* on the basis of eighty-four more-or-less preserved lines (cited by Jacques 1998, xiii), or some of T.B.L. Webster's restorations of Menander's plots. Similar care must be taken in employing the evidence provided by mosaics and murals that depict scenes from Menander's plays, since we cannot be certain whether such depictions invariably represent what was

invariable disparity between the results and reality stand as a warning against extending analysis into the realm of intellectual conceit.

Though time has been miserly in preserving New Comedy texts in their original form, far more has survived through the later Roman adaptations of Plautus and Terence.[16] Yet while these have much to tell us about plot and the characters involved, we need to be wary of seeing them as accurate mirrors of their originals or as representing a unified genre. In fact, what evidence there is suggests as wide a diversity of approach to comedy between Greek authors[17] as we find in their later Roman counterparts, and in the rare instances where both Greek and Latin material survives, it is clear that differences in audience and ethos have required at times radical rewriting.[18]

All drama is a dialogue between playwright and audience, and this is especially true of the ancient theatre, where productions continued to be presented as part of a dramatic contest[19] As a result, the preferences and susceptibilities of the audience must have had no less an influence upon the work of playwrights than the political and social milieu in which they wrote.[20] By the reverse process, successful innovations will have had their own effect on the expectations of audiences. Yet who were the audiences of New Comedy? Unfortunately we have little real information upon which to base any coherent answer. The posited abolition in the 420s of the Theoric Fund, which had previously subsidised attendance at the theatre, might well have restricted those who attended performances

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actually seen rather than events merely described (cf. Gomme-Sandbach 1973, 675). For the depictions themselves, see inter alia Charitonidis et al. (1970), Strocka (1977), Blume (1998, 28–31). In the Loeb edition, W.G. Arnott presents a useful discussion in the introductions to the following plays: *Encheiridion*, *Epitrepontes*, *Theophoroumene*, *Leukadia*, *Misoumenos*, *Perikeiromene*, *Samia*, *Sikyonios*, *Synaristosae*, *Phasma*.

[16] See, for instance, the lists of coresponsion between Latin plays and their known Greek counterparts in Duckworth (1952, 52–53), R. Hunter (1985, 3–4).

[17] Astorga (1990, ch. 3–4).

[18] W.S. Anderson (1993, ch. 1).

[19] Perhaps the clearest evidence of contact between stage and audience (apart from the prologues that occupy a status all their own within the plays) includes the blatant appeals to the audience—"Gentlemen"—at moments of high tension (e.g., *Dyskolos* 194: Sostratos' reaction to seeing the girl he loves). The most overt such reference comes at the beginning of Demeas' great monologue in *Samia* Act III in which he actually draws the audience into the play. It is usual to find such features described as ruptures in the dramatic illusion, though whether we can talk of such a feature in the context of the ancient comic stage is questionable, especially when a high proportion of action is given over to monologues clearly inserted solely for the audience's benefit.

[20] This latter aspect is discussed by Lape (2004).

to the wealthier, and perhaps better educated, sections of society.[21] Yet direct evidence for the demise of the fund does not seem to exist,[22] and even the effect such an event may have had upon the plays presented has not gone unchallenged in the face of those more tangible consequences for fourth-century society that stem from a rise in collective anxiety at developments beyond the ability of the individual or even the city-state to control. Another line of approach in attempting to gauge the composition of the audience is to examine the themes of New Comedy itself: the fact that the characters involved have been aptly described as "the undistinguished rich and the undistinguished poor". Does the emphasis placed upon the emotional entanglements of such people say anything about the audiences who attended the plays? Perhaps, but unfortunately the argument is now becoming dangerously circular, and we might profitably turn instead to the evidence that does survive.

2. *The Major Playwrights of New Comedy*

Of the sixty-four writers mentioned by Anonymous *De Comoedia* 15, only four are sufficiently well documented to be included on any scale in the handbooks, and of these only Menander is now represented by a sufficiently substantial body of text to make modern evaluation of his work in any detail feasible. The others are often included mainly because they are known to have provided the original versions of later Roman adaptations.[23]

a. *Philemon*

Born ca. 368–360, though the sources are divided as to where,[24] Philemon is said to have produced ninety-seven plays[25] in a lifetime that spanned nearly a hundred years and in the list of New Comedy poets

[21] W.G. Arnott (1981, 215); Blanchard (1983, 387–388).

[22] Webster (1970, 101–102) points to the possible evidence inherent in the restricted political franchise introduced in 322, but rightly questions if this in itself would have affected the audience's composition.

[23] I omit here any treatment of Demophilos, whose *Onagos* was adapted by Plautus as *Asinaria*, since this is the only information about him that has survived.

[24] The *Suda* φ 327 and Anonymus *De Comoedia* give Syracuse; Strabo XIV 5, 8 Soloi in Cilicia.

[25] Anonymus *De Comoedia* 16 = *testimonium* 2 Kassel-Austin; Diodorus XXIII 6 = *testimonium* 4 Kassel-Austin.

stands only second to Menander.[26] By 307–306 he had been granted Athenian citizenship for his dramatic productions, though he won first prize on only four occasions.[27] Of the ca. two hundred fragments and references that remain of his works, the longest amounts to no more than twenty-four lines from the *Stratiotes* (Athenaeus VII 288C = Kassel-Austin fr. 82) in which a cook boasts of his skill in terms reminiscent of Middle Comedy, the influence of which is also suggested by the mythological themes inherent in a number of his plays' titles (e.g., *Myrmidons*, *Palamedes*) and the fact that his career began before 328.[28] Some slight appreciation of his work on a larger scale is to be seen through his influence on later Roman comedy, the fact that Plautus adapted of a number of his plays: *Mercator* from *Emporos*, *Trinummus* from *Thesauros*, and perhaps *Mostellaria* from *Phasma*, though in this last instance certainty is impossible (Damen 1985, 366–381, for instance, attributes it to Diphilus). In any case we need constantly to be aware of the difficulty of distinguishing in such adaptations what is the work of Philemon and what owes its existence to Plautus.[29] Equally, the moralising tone of some of his fragments, which results in what Astorga calls a "stodgy style",[30] may also give an undeserved and slanted impression, though we are perhaps not unjustified in seeing in his characters an exaggeration that separates him from the gentler approach of Menander.

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[26] This generally recognised order of excellence was not universal in antiquity: Quintilian X 1, 72, "Philemon, who in the idiosyncratic judgement of the time was preferred to Menander, but in the opinion of all deserved second place". Certainly the order of presentation in Anonymus *De Comoedia* 15 = *testimonium* 2 Kassel-Austin places Philemon first. At all events, the close rivalry of the two playwrights is well illustrated by the anecdote in Aulus Gellius XVII 4.1 = Menander *testimonium* 71 Kassel-Austin of an encounter between the two, and Menander's question, "Tell me, Philemon, don't you blush when you beat me?"

[27] For the details of Philemon's life, see Webster (1970, 125–126), Körte's article in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, W.G. Arnott's article in the *OCD*. Aelian fr. 1H = *testimonium* 6 Kassel-Austin makes him 101 at his death, though others (*testimonium* 1, 4, 5 Kassel-Austin) give 94, 97, or 99. Of the details provided by the *testimonia*, many are clearly anecdotal, though a visit to the court of Ptolemy in Egypt and the production there of a number of plays is a perfectly feasible event (Alciphron 4, 18 = Menander *testimonium* 20 Kassel-Austin).

[28] Anonymus *De Comoedia* 16, which says he began producing before the 113th Olympiad.

[29] An attempt to use Plautus to establish an understanding of Philemon's technique is made by W.S. Anderson (1993, ch. 2), but contains a number of inherent problems.

[30] Astorga (1990, 10). Hence perhaps the verdict of Demetrius *On Style* 193, "Menander … is popular with actors, Philemon with readers".

Overall, within the ancient evidence, the best appreciation of his work is provided by Apuleius *Florida* 16.6–9 (= *testimonium* 7 Kassel-Austin):

> This Philemon was a poet of Middle Comedy and wrote plays for the stage at the time of Menander and was one of his rivals. He was perhaps not on a par with Menander but he did rival him and, I'm ashamed to say, often defeated him. Yet you will certainly find in his plays much wit; the plots are well contrived, and the recognition scenes clearly worked out; the characters are appropriate to the situations, the sentiments expressed true to life, the jokes not unworthy of comedy, the serious sections never quite on the level of tragedy. Seductions are rare in his plays, wrongdoings never excessive, love escapades within reason. Even so you will find the faithless pimp, the passionate lover, the cunning slave, the coquettish mistress, the jealous overbearing wife, the indulgent mother, the reproving uncle-figure, the helpful friend, the bellicose soldier, also the hungry parasite, skinflint parents and wanton prostitutes.

b. *Diphilus*

A native of Sinope on the southern shore of the Black Sea, his dates are uncertain, though he is said by Anonymus *De Comoedia* 18 to have produced his plays at the same time as Menander.[31] Of his ca. one hundred plays,[32] three won victories, and some were later adapted by Plautus for the Roman stage: *Casina* from *Cleroumene*, *Rudens* from *Pera*, and the fragmentary *Vidularia* from *Schedia*. It was also from Diphilus' *Synapothnescontes*, previously adapted by Plautus as *Commorientes*, that Terence claimed he extracted the abduction scene used in *Adelphoe* (6–11). Such adaptations indeed have largely been instrumental in characterising his works as colourful romantic comedies with at times mythological themes that, while lacking individuality of character development so evident in Menander, combined parody and verbal humour such as punning, spectacle, and conventional comic routines (inserted at times for their own sake, as Plautus was later to do) with scenes of blatant bawdiness and feasting reminiscent of much earlier comedy.[33]

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[31] Detailed and perceptive surveys of Diphilus are provided by Damen (1985) and Astorga (1990); cf. W.S. Anderson (1993, 46ff.), W.G. Arnott's article in the *OCD*, and Webster (1970, 152–183), who at times displays a too uncritical acceptance of his sources.

[32] Anonymus *De Comoedia* = *testimonium* 1 (Kassel-Austin) From such an output, however, only 133 certain fragments remain, the longest being forty-one lines from *Zographos* (Athenaeus VII 291F = fr. 42 Kassel-Austin), followed by twenty-seven lines of *Emporos* (Athenaeus VI 227D–E = fr. 31 Kassel-Austin).

[33] Certainly Plautus' *Casina* and the sexual innuendoes in the scenes between Sceparnio and Ampelisca in *Rudens* suggest that a racy style of comedy was typical of Diphilus.

c. *Apollodorus of Carystus*

Information on Apollodorus is complicated by the existence of another New Comedy playwright of the same name but a native of Gela, and there is uncertainty as to which of the two is the source of some fragments.[34] Apollodorus of Carystus (in Euboea) was of a younger generation than Menander, and according to the *Suda* a 3404 (= *testimonium* 7 Kassel-Austin), he produced forty-seven plays, five of which won first prize. His significance, however, lies not in the extent of his surviving remains, which are in any case meagre,[35] but in the fact that he provided the originals for two of Terence's plays: *Phormio* from the *Epidikazomenos*, and *Hecyra* from a play of the same name. In his commentary on Terence, Donatus[36] cites four lines from *Epidikazomenos* and just over seven from the Greek *Hekyra*.[37] Tradition records that Apollodorus was much indebted to the earlier work of Menander, and the similarities between *Hecyra* and Menander's *Epitrepontes*, both based on a rupture in marital relations brought about by a baby conceived out of wedlock, tend to bear this out.[38] Significantly, though, a number of differences suggest that Apollodorus deliberately attempted to vary some stock themes of the Menandrian version: the ring by which the dénouement comes about is seized not by the victim, as usually happens, but by the assailant; in Apollodorus overt concern for the welfare of the partner is a feature of the young husband rather than the wife, as in Menander; the almost

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This seems to be confirmed by titles such as *Paiderastai* and fragments like 42 and 49, with their homosexual references (Astorga 1990, 32–33). However, Damen (1985, 2–5) questions whether the evidence necessarily proves a strong Middle Comedy influence.

[34] See further Webster (1970, 225–252). The longest fragment of Apollodorus, just over twenty-six lines long, comes from the *Grammateidopoios* describing the mutual hatred of Greek cities (Athenaeus VII 280D–E = fr. 5 Kassel-Austin), though Pollux IV 19 states that Apollodorus of Gela also a wrote a play of that title.

[35] Some thirty-two fragments, though this figure may be increased by the twenty or so attributed to Apollodorus but with no distinction as to which.

[36] Wessner (1902–1905).

[37] *Epidikazomenos*: fr. 17 Kassel-Austin = *Phormio* 87; fr. 23 = *Phormio* 562; fr. 24 = *Phormio* 575; fr. 25 = *Phormio* 587. Further references to Apollodorus' version are given by Donatus at *Phormio* 46, 91, 281, 339, 482, 506, 646, 661, 668, but either without the Greek text or with what has become a garbled version.

῾Εκυρα: fr. 8 Kassel-Austin = *Hecyra* 58 ff., fr. 9 = *Hecyra* 214, fr. 10 = *Hecyra* 286 ff., fr. 11 = *Hecyra* 380; fr. 13 = *Hecyra* 620. Again Donatus also cites a number of further parallels but without providing the Greek text at *Hecyra* 440, 824.

[38] See further Ireland (1990, 13–15), Kuiper (1938). Any such comparison is based, of course, on the premise that Terence essentially preserved the Apollodoran plotline.

accidental means by which the hetaira[39] Bacchis brings about the resolution of the situation in Apollodorus contrasts with the more deliberate efforts of Menander's Habrotonon.

3. *Menander*[40]

Life, Works, and Reputation

Menander was born at Athens in 342/341 BCE and died in 292/291 aged fifty-one, reportedly as the result of a drowning accident at Piraeus.[41] Tradition made him a friend of the philosopher Epicurus, with whom he studied under the tutorship of Theophrastus, the successor to Aristotle at the Lyceum. He is also said to have learned the art of producing plays from Alexis, a major figure in the period of Middle Comedy. So close indeed was their connection deemed to be that one authority made them uncle and nephew.[42] In the course of his career, Menander is credited with having written between 105 and 109 plays (Aulus Gellius XVII 4, 4; *Suda* μ 589), though this may have been inflated by the attachment of alternative titles to some plays, which were later taken as separate works.[43] Today some ninety-seven titles are known, and even allowing for an element of inflation and the possibility that some plays either never appeared on the stage or were wrongly attributed to the playwright, it is clear that Menander must have written for a variety of Athenian festivals in addition to the City Dionysia and the Lenaea, the venue for *Dyskolos*—perhaps even for other cities.[44]

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[39] On the range of meaning in the term *hetaira* (lit. female companion), see Brown (1990a, 246–250).

[40] Some sections below are taken from my edition of *Dyskolos*. I am grateful to the publishers for the permission to do this.

[41] There is some slight uncertainty as to the exact precision of these dates because of variation in our sources, but the degree of that variation does not affect the general outline. The ancient texts providing details of Menander's life are most readily accessible in Körte (1959, II 1–4), and Kassel and Austin (1998, VI 2, 1–3). For a discussion of Menander's dates, see S.F. Schröder (1996, 35–48); for Menander's life and so on, see further, Blume (1998, 5–10).

[42] *Suda* a 1138, cf. W.G. Arnott (1996, 11–13, and 26–28, where he discusses links between Alexis' plays and those of Plautus and Menander).

[43] Of the major extant plays, alternative titles exist for *Dyskolos* (*Misanthropos*), *Misoumenos* (*Thrasonides*), *Samia* (*Kedeia*), and *Sikyonios* (*Sikyonioi*, *Sikyonia*). Katsouris' bibliography of Menander (xii–xiii) presents a full list of the playwright's titles, including the alternatives. On the *Sikyonios*/*oi* problem, see W.G. Arnott, Loeb III 196–198.

[44] Thus N.W. Slater (1995, 34) argues that the tendency of the theatre to become

Despite his output Menander won first prize in the dramatic contests on only eight occasions,[45] very much in line with the experience of other playwrights, but a stark contrast to the high regard his work was subsequently to enjoy. Aristophanes of Byzantium, for instance, writing nearly a hundred years later, placed him second only to Homer[46] in popularity and posed the now-famous question: "Menander and life, which of you imitated the other?"[47] In Roman times Quintilian so admired the speeches Menander placed into the mouths of his characters that he devoted more space to the playwright than to any other ancient writer.[48] By far the most wide-ranging praise of Menander's style, though, came from Plutarch in a study that compared him with Aristophanes and set him at the pinnacle of theatrical achievement, *Moralia* 853e–854b:

> Menander's diction is so polished and its ingredients united into so consistent a whole that, despite the range of emotions and types of character involved and the fact that it has to adapt itself to all kinds of people, it nevertheless appears as one and preserves its uniformity in common and familiar words that are in general use. But if the action should anywhere call for linguistic fireworks and bluster, Menander opens all the stops, as it were, and then quickly and plausibly closes them and brings the tone back

international may account for a number of its New Comedy characteristics (the decline in the chorus, the absence of specific Athenian and metatheatrical references) and that our texts may in fact represent the "international" version. The omission from the Bodmer papyrus of *Samia* 606–611, with its reference to Androkles, which was clearly meant to produce some resonance of recognition from the audience, may be evidence of such an international edition compared to the (Athenian-oriented?) Cairo manuscript.

[45] Aulus Gellius XVII 4, 6, = *testimonium* 46 Kassel-Austin; cf. Martial V 10, 9 = *testimonium* 98 Kassel-Austin: "Rarely did the theatre applaud Menander to victory"; *testimonium* 51 (Kassel-Austin), which, though fragmentary, suggests that on at least one occasion, Menander came fifth and last in the dramatic contest In the same way, Euripides, despite his subsequent popularity, is said to have won only four victories at the City Dionysia festival, though he is credited with the production of over ninety dramas—cf. Philemon's four victories and Apollodorus' five. That the number of Menander's victories is not a true reflection of his reputation even when alive is suggested by the story in Pliny the Elder *Natural History* VII 111 = *testimonium* 15 Kassel-Austin that he was invited both to Egypt and to Macedon, though he declined the offers.

[46] *IG* XIV 1183c = *testimonium* 170 Kassel-Austin.

[47] *testimonium* 83 Kassel-Austin, cf. Manilius V 475ff. = *testimonium* 94 Kassel-Austin, "Menander, who revealed life to life"; scholiast on Dionysius Thrax = *testimonium* 151 Kassel-Austin, "(Menander) who is the star of New Comedy"; *IG* XIV 1183b = *testimonium* 170, "Love's companion and Siren of the Theatre"; Themistius Or. XX 236C = *testimonium* 126 Kassel-Austin, "Menander the Golden".

[48] *Institutio Oratoria* X i, 69–72. Quintilian's admiration is well summed up by his words: "[S]o perfect is his representation of actual life, so rich is his power of invention and his gift of style, so perfectly does he adapt himself to every kind of circumstance, character and emotion" (trans. Butler).

> to its natural quality. And though there have been many noted artisans, no shoemaker ever made a shoe, no mask-maker a mask, no costumier a garment that fitted equally well man and woman, child, old man and slave. Yet Menander has so blended his diction that it suits every character, every disposition, every age; and this though he was still young when he began his career and died at the height of his poetic and theatrical skill, the very moment when, as Aristotle says, a writer's style makes its most notable and far-reaching progress … If one were to compare Menander's first productions with those of his middle and later periods, one would realise how much more he would have advanced had he lived … As well as possessing charm Menander never needs to go outside his own powers for anything. In the theatre, in the classroom, at parties his poetry provides a wider range of reading matter, instruction and entertainment than any other work produced in Greece. He displays the essence and nature of linguistic skill. He approaches every topic with inescapable persuasiveness, and has in his control every resource of sound and meaning which the Greek language possesses. What reason has an educated man for going to the theatre, except to see Menander?[49]

Yet for all this, Menander failed to become part of the canon of authors who survived into the middle ages and beyond, thus giving the lie to Ovid's claim (*Amores* I 15, 17 ff.): "While the tricky slave, the stern father, the shameless bawd, the charming prostitute exist, so too will Menander". The exact reason for this we shall never know. In part it may have been the fact that his Greek was not the pure form demanded by later schoolmasters, in part his subject matter—love intrigues—or perhaps no more than a series of accidents that prevented the copying of his works.[50]

An important formative element in shaping Menander's plays was the period in which he lived, one which saw a catastrophic decline in Athens'

[49] Further evidence of the high regard in which Menander was held is suggested by the existence of ancient commentaries on his works by Lynceus, Timachides, Didymos, Soteridas, and Nicadios, or summaries of his plots by Sellios (*testimonium* 75, 77–80, 82 Kassel-Austin). Much of this praise, however, came from a period that judged by the principles of rhetoric and philosophy rather than drama (Astorga 1990, 17 ff.). On the negative side, we also hear of Aristophanes of Byzantium's work, *Parallels to Menander*, and selections of the sources from which he stole, a six-book work by Latinus on Menander's plagiarism (*testimonium* 76, 81 Kassel-Austin), the claim by Caecilius that Menander's *Deisidaimon* was a lift from Antiphanes' *Oionistes*, and Phrynichus' complaint against Menander-mania and his divergence from classical Attic vocabulary (*Eclogae* 394 = *testimonium* 119 Kassel-Austin).

[50] Some of Menander's plays were still available in the sixth and seventh centuries to be read or mined for references by writers like Choricius of Gaza and Theophylactus of Simocatta, but thereafter there is almost unrelieved silence. Easterling (1995, 153–160) suggests that Menander was so much a feature of popular culture in later antiquity that people simply did not notice that the actual texts were being lost.

independence: first after the defeat by Philip of Macedon at Chaeronea in 338 BCE, which stripped the city of an independent foreign policy; then in the revolt that followed the death of Alexander, which resulted in the imposition of a Macedonian garrison in Piraeus by Antipater and a property qualification for civic activity such as jury service; finally the imposition in 317 of a pro-Macedonian overseer in the shape of Demetrius of Phaleron, who signalled essentially the eclipse of even internal autonomy. It was in these later years that Menander began writing, with his first play, *Orge*, produced ca. 321 BCE and *Dyskolos* in 317/316.[51] Evidence of the problems that political upheavals could create is graphically seen in 307 when Macedonian interests were overthrown and Athens accepted the protection of Demetrius Poliorcetes. The resultant expulsion of Demetrius of Phaleron brought with it a purge of those associated with him, among them Menander, who had long been a friend and had shared the same educational background. It was only the intervention of Poliorcetes' cousin Telesphoros that seems to have saved the playwright.[52] In the years thereafter, Athens was to remain a pawn in the wider struggle of Greek politics, so it is hardly surprising that the playwright avoided the topicality of earlier comedy—a topicality that, from available evidence, had in any case been in decline throughout the period of Middle Comedy. The nearest he comes to dealing with the rancour of politics is in the altercation between Smikrines and Blepes at the beginning of *Sikyonios* act IV with its references to oligarchs and democrats, or the background of mercenary service in *Aspis*.[53]

In addition to creating an atmosphere hostile to topical comedy, events in Athens had other, no less important, repercussions for the products of

[51] The date of *Dyskolos* relies upon emendation of the didaskalia, but is generally held to be secure. See further Sherk (1968, 103–108), S.F. Schröder (1996, n. 9). The dating of the other extant plays is not directly attested, and suggested dates rest on factors such as claimed topical references and style.

[52] Demetrius Laertius V 71 = *testimonium* 9 Kassel-Austin.

[53] Contrast Wiles (1984, 170–179), who sees a greater degree of topicality in *Dyskolos*, produced at a time of oligarchic government, than most commentators have been willing to accept. These include the setting, Phyle, occupied in 317 by a Macedonian garrison, but also the place from which the liberation of Athens from the Thirty tyrants had begun, the criticism of extravagance echoing Demetrius' sumptuary legislation, and identification of Knemon with the disfranchised poor. Similarly, W.G. Arnott in Loeb III 9–11 sees topical references at *Samia* 101–104, 504, 570, 603–604, 606–608, and uses such factors as the expulsion of the Samian population and the mention of Bactria and Caria in Act V to date the play to 314. That the problems faced by Athens in terms of a decline in wealth and interest in public affairs during the course of the fourth century has been overstated by commentators is maintained by Rothwell (1995, 99–118).

the theatre. One of these was the abolition under Demetrius of Phaleron of the choregia, the system of financing dramatic choruses by individuals, and its replacement with an agonothetes, a public official charged with organising the festivals.[54] It is tempting, in fact, to see here the final stages in that long decline in the status of the chorus that had been underway for most of the century. In addition, as discussed above, the nature of the audience itself may have changed, from a broad cross-section of Athenian citizenry to the more privileged sections of society.

4. *The Resurrection of Menander*

Before 1844 virtually nothing of Menander's original works seemed to have survived. Then came some forty lines of *Epitrepontes* and fifty-six of *Phasma* from St Catherine's monastery on Sinai, scraps written on parchment later reused for an eighth-century Syriac text and subsequently incorporated into the binding of yet another work.[55] Later, in 1897–1898, came the opening of *Georgos*, and in 1899 some fifty lines of *Perikeiromene*. In contrast, the twentieth century was veritably prolific, with parts of the *Kolax* emerging from the Egyptian town of Oxyrhynchus in 1903, supplemented by further discoveries in 1914 and 1968, making a total of over 150 lines or part lines. This was followed in 1906 by the publication of ca. 110 lines of *Sikyonios* on papyrus incorporated into a mummy case in the Sorbonne, later augmented by further sections—from the very same copy, in fact—in other mummy cases. The following year, Lefebvre published more extensive material still, this time from the house of Flavius Dioscorus, a lawyer and poet who lived at Aphroditopolis in Egypt in the sixth century. The manuscript, found on top of and around a jar filled with other papyri, yielded over half of *Epitrepontes* and about 40 percent of *Perikeiromene* and *Samia*, together with smaller sections of *Heros* and a nameless play (*Fabula Incerta*). To these were added during the same year nearly a hundred lines of *Kitharistes* published in Berlin. Then, in 1908, the text of *Perikeiromene* was supplemented with ca. 120 lines from a vellum codex, and in 1935 small sections of *Theophoroumene* appeared. The really major development, though, came in 1958–1959 with the publication by Victor Martin of

[54] Rothwell (1995, 105 f.).

[55] The various manuscripts are usefully described by W.G. Arnott in the introduction to each play in his Loeb editions. See further Blume (1998, 35 f.), Mertens (1992, 330–356).

part of a papyrus codex that had found its way into the library of the Swiss industrialist Martin Bodmer—the virtually complete text of *Dyskolos*. In 1969 the remaining extant parts of the codex, containing parts of *Samia* and *Aspis*, were published, augmenting earlier finds. The late 1960s also saw the appearance of over four hundred lines or part-lines of *Misoumenos* and in 1968 some sixty usable lines of *Dis Exapaton*, the first major overlap between a Greek original and a complete Roman adaptation (Plautus' *Bacchides*).[56] Since the 1960s finds have been more modest, the most significant being additions to *Epitrepontes* act IV, which help us to appreciate all the more Pamphile's defence of her marriage, the opening to *Misoumenos*, and lines of *Leukadia*, which may be linked to further material cited in the ancient authors.[57] All the while, though, other smaller fragments of plays were coming to light, so that today an edition containing upwards of twenty plays in varying states of preservation is perfectly feasible.

Though the existence of such papyri takes us closer to the ancient text of Menander than any mediaeval manuscript could, the evidence they provide is not without problems of its own. Often physical damage has either removed whole sections of text or left only tantalising shreds of information; and even when the text is preserved, the absence of what would be regarded today as normal features in any work of literature—word division, punctuation, and a clear method of indicating speaker—can create considerable uncertainty of interpretation. Rarely, in fact, is an actual name given in the manuscripts (usually only at the beginning of acts or where a new character enters a scene). Instead, changes of speaker are marked by the paragraphos (a line under the first one or two letters of the line in which a change is to take place) and dicolon (:) at the actual

[56] Prior to this the scholarly world had been dependent upon three fragments of Menander's *Plokion* (just over thirty-one lines) cited by Aulus Gellius II 23 together with the corresponding Latin sections by Caecilius. The fact that the latter play had not survived naturally reduced our ability to gauge either version in any detail, and certainly Gellius himself was scathing in his criticism of Caecilius' efforts. Subsequently, discovery of brief sections from Menander's *Leukadia* has allowed a passing (two-and-a-half line) comparison with the equally meagre remains of Turpilius' adaptation. A Menandrian origin is also known for a number of other Roman plays: Plautus' *Stichus* from *Adelphoe*, *Poenulus* from *Karchedonios*, *Cistellaria* from *Synaristosae* (some slight overlap, though not involving whole lines of the Greek original, now seemingly possible with *Cistellaria* 306–317; see W.G. Arnott Loeb III 340–342), and the originals of Terence's *Andria*, *Heautontimorumenos*, *Eunuchus*, and *Adelphoe*. A Menandrian origin has also been suspected for Plautus' *Aulularia*, though W.G. Arnott (1989b, 27–38) argues for Alexis as the author of the Greek original.

[57] See further W.G. Arnott (2004a, 35–53, 2004b, 269–292), Nünlist (2004).

point of change. The use of the dicolon also to mark a change of addressee, and the potential for such marks to be omitted or lost through damage, mean that at times the identity of the speaker is in serious doubt.[58]

5. *Modern Approaches to Menander*

The dichotomy in approaches to Menander evident in ancient references is, in many respects, mirrored by the reaction of modern scholarship to his work.[59] Publication of the Aphroditopolis fragments in 1907 was greeted with widespread astonishment and delight that an author of such stature, long regarded as irretrievably lost, should suddenly be accessible once again. Similar excitement greeted the publication of *Dyskolos*, still our only virtually complete play, in 1958–1959. With time, however, much of that excitement has given way to a grudging admission that there are aspects that have failed to live up to expectation;[60] some have even dismissed the playwright's work as altogether without value.[61] In many respects such variation is understandable. Initial expectations were fed by centuries of tantalising ignorance concerning the plays themselves, combined with the playwright's reputation in antiquity. Scholars simply expected too much from a corpus of material that is still painfully small in comparison to the playwright's total output.[62] Similarly, many failed to bear in mind the circumstances of Menander's productions: social com-

[58] Descriptions of manuscript problems are summarised by Goldberg (1980, 10–12), Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 40–42). Among the numerous examples of uncertainty in speaker attribution we can include *Dyskolos* Act V (whether Getas or Sikon takes the lead in annoying Knemon), *Samia* 96–105, where editors have generally inserted a role for Nikeratos (98–101) against the evidence of the manuscript, and *Perikeiromene* 1021–1022, 1023 (whether we are justified in seeing here a speaking role for Glykera, as hinted at by the manuscript).

[59] This can even be seen in modern interpretations of the ancient appraisals of Menander. Zagagi (1994, 171n7), for instance, interprets Plutarch *Moralia* 347E = *testimonium* 70 Kassel-Austin ("the plot is complete; all that is needed is the dialogue") as evidence of the playwright maximising the conventionality of New Comedy, while others would see the anecdote as evidence of Menander's regard for the primacy of the plot.

[60] See for instance W.G. Arnott (1989b). As Walton-Arnott (1996, 41 ff.) observe, however, a problem often arises, in that devices viewed as vivid in Menander's day are seen today as hackneyed, and that our approach to Menander is now almost exclusively through the text.

[61] The most extreme denunciations of Menander are voiced by Tarn (1952, 273)—"the dreariest desert in literature"—and P. Green (1990, 65–79).

[62] That Menander's plays may have displayed far greater variety than the extant remains would have us believe is suggested indeed on the technical level by the fact that

edy but without (so far as we can tell) much social comment. Apart from the general atmosphere of humanity that pervades the plays through the implicit championing of natural justice, we look in vain for specific messages relevant to the contemporary scene (*pace* Wiles 1984 and Arnott [Loeb n. 53] above). Whether we even see social reality at all, as opposed to an escapist fantasy world, is open to debate.[63] The problem, as Zagagi (1994, 94 ff.) well demonstrates, is to a large extent caused by the differing theatrical expectations between antiquity and the present day, combined with Menander's use of, but not enslavement to, the social and legal conventions of his times. Much of Menander's reputation in antiquity was based upon his ability to disguise sophistication of technique with an aura of naturalness and to suggest that the events portrayed flow with inevitable ease from characters we accept as wholly credible. The danger comes in equating the illusion of naturalness with the banal, forgetting that there is nothing truly inevitable in drama, that everything is the creation of the playwright. The analytical approach today must, therefore, delve below the surface to reveal the sophistication beneath.

Menander, like all great dramatists, was a master of manipulation, in particular the manipulation of his audiences, and in this he often aimed at two basic effects. The first is purely dramatic, inducing the theatregoer to expect one stereotypical line of development, only to delight by development of another.[64] The other is more technical: the use of the audience's knowledge of the wider picture to circumvent a totally logical, though longer, approach.[65] There is a danger of viewing such features as faults within the dramatic art, whereas they are in fact an essential part of creating an illusion of real life within the inevitably short compass of the dramatic form. At the same time, we must never lose sight of the fact that the playwright's primary aim was victory in the dramatic contests. To achieve this he needed to gain an immediate and positive response from his audience as the action unfolded before them. There is no room here

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whereas song from an actor is nowhere to be found in the major plays, it does appear in a number of the more fragmentary remains: anapaests in *Leukadia*, ithyphallics in *Phasma*, and dactylic hexameters in *Theophoroumene*.

[63] See, for instance, Walcot (1987, 5–33).

[64] So, for instance, at *Dyskolos* 181–185 we are led to expect that resolution of the plot will be brought about by a cunning slave character so familiar from Roman comedy, only for this to be rendered impossible by the slave in question being unavailable. Other examples involve the depiction of supposedly stereotyped characters such as soldiers, only to show quite a different reality. See further here section 8, "Some Aspects of Menandrian Technique".

[65] See below, "Economy".

for the hidden message that only becomes evident after careful scrutiny of the text by the reader or through page after page of closely argued scholarly discussion. The commentator must, therefore, tread a fine line between discovering those elements that Menander intended and producing flights of scholarly fancy by inserting spurious significance into what may well be chance associations. Similarly suspect is too close a use of Menander as a source for understanding contemporary society. True, there is much in the plays specifically designed to strike a chord with the concerns of the original audience, as many excellent studies have shown, but equally Menander was capable of distorting the reality of that society for the purposes of his drama, and in many cases (as, for instance, the reality of the love entanglements he presents), there is sufficient uncertainty of scholarly interpretation to suggest the need to avoid too detailed a sociological approach.

6. *Menander in the New Comedy Genre*

a. *The Acts*

From its earliest origins, drama has operated within a set of structural parameters that, while capable of variation, are constantly discernible. In the case of New Comedy, the most obvious structural feature of the plays is the division into five acts by the intervention of four choral interludes. Reference to such division was already signalled by Horace,[66] but it gained firsthand proof of existence in the present century, in particular from the publication of *Dyskolos*.[67] Within the overall structure of the plays, the acts display a steady progression from exposition to complication and thence to resolution. What Menander does not do, however, is straightjacket himself by limiting such developments to specific acts.[68] In the case of *Dyskolos*, for instance, act I is predictably expository in nature, introducing the major characters involved and underpinning the difficulties faced by Sostratos in his quest to gain the girl he loves through an

[66] *De Arte Poetica* 189 ff.: "Let not the play be less than five Acts nor go beyond five Acts". See Brink (1971, 248–250).

[67] Supplementary evidence of five acts is suggested by the fact that the Mytilene mosaics, which show scenes from Menandrian plays, contain references to five acts but no more. See further Charitonidis et al. (1970), Kahil (1970, 231–251), Walton-Arnott (1996, 9–12).

[68] This is well demonstrated by Lloyd-Jones (1987, 313–321), R. Hunter (1985, 37–42), and especially Holzberg (1974).

initial encounter with her father, Knemon. Yet act II continues this expository function by bringing Gorgias on stage for the first time. Even more striking evidence of Menander's variability comes in acts IV and V of some plays. The rigorist's view of Menandrian dramatic technique would locate in act IV the resolution of the plot, while reserving act V for tying up loose ends and reconciling or punishing those who have impeded the happy ending. Yet in *Epitrepontes*, act IV opens with a continuing complication as Smikrines tries to force his daughter into divorcing her husband, while in *Misoumenos* the resolution spills into act V as Thrasonides comes onstage still unaware of the marriage being arranged for him.[69] Even more radical is the additional complication injected into act V of *Samia* after the ostensible resolution in act IV, as Moschion attempts to punish his father for suspecting him of an affair with Chrysis. The injection of such material into the final act—the sting in the tail of the action—contributes considerably, in fact, to the play's overall success through the surprise it engenders.[70]

Within acts, too, structure and variation are visible as monologue gives way to dialogue or vice versa, and characters either come and go with remarkable speed or an individual is allowed to dominate a whole act, as Demeas does in *Samia* act III. Nor does Menander neglect the possibility of linkage between acts through the use of the so-called mirror scenes, where events in one act are balanced by similar ones in another.[71] On an smaller scale, we find linkage even between adjoining scenes—where the final statement of one character is picked up by the first of another (*Dyskolos* 521–522: the mention of Phyle)—or the minimising of act breaks by the use of bridging characters who are introduced at the end of one act but whose role continues at the beginning of the next.[72]

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[69] Cf. *Sikyonios*, where it is only in Act V that Kichesias is reunited with his daughter.

[70] The effectiveness of the device is also well illustrated by its continued use in later Roman drama, most notably at the end of Terence's *Adelphoe*, itself an adaptation of a lost play by Menander. Here Demeas turns the tables on his brother—at the brother's expense—by assuming a level of generosity quite out of keeping with his earlier behaviour. Whether, however, the ending truly mirrors Menander's play or is a product of Terence himself is a moot point; see R.H. Martin (1976, 22–29). Cf. Gratwick (1999, 48–53).

[71] See the section on "Mirror Scenes" below; Katsouris (1981, 73–76).

[72] One might include here Daos in *Dyskolos* Acts I–II, Getas in II–III, Kallippides in IV–V, Onesimos in *Epitrepontes* Acts II–III, Kleinias in *Misoumenos* Acts III–IV, Daos in *Perikeiromene* Acts I–II, Niceratos in *Samia* Acts III–IV.

b. *Choral Interludes*

The chorus in Old Comedy was a pivotal element in the dramatic action of the play, intervening in the events portrayed, singing odes germane to the plots, and in the parabasis stepping out of character to deliver advice to the audience. By the end of the fifth century, however, the parabasis was clearly in decline, and with it the odes too began to fade. By Menander's time the chorus had become no more than the provider of interludes within the body of plays, included simply because they had been associated with drama from the very beginning, a group of revellers, usually drunk (if references to them at the end of act I in *Aspis*, *Dyskolos*, *Epitrepontes*, and *Perikeiromene* are representative of the genre as a whole), whose entry is signalled by the characters on the stage only at the end of act I. Subsequent interventions are indicated in our text only by the word XOPOY (choral section), which first makes its appearance in Aristophanes' last two plays. What they sang, if they sang at all, is a mystery to us since no text belonging to the chorus has survived.[73] Such evidence as there is suggests, in fact, that the chorus had become nonorganic, totally detached from the stage action, and in many respects hardly more relevant than the advertisements that today punctuate television programmes.[74] This uncertainty of role is further exacerbated by the total silence concerning what they did during the acts themselves and when they made their final exit.[75] Where the chorus does on occasion have a technical function, however, is in providing a break in the action to cover certain offstage events and indicating the passing of time. In *Dyskolos*, for instance, the interval between acts I and II allows for Daos to reach

[73] The chorus of Fishermen in Plautus' Roman adaptation *Rudens* (290 ff.) and the Advocati of *Poenulus* (504 ff.) present a problem for which no adequate solution has been provided. Do they indicate that they stem from Greek Middle Comedy or are they a purely Plautine invention? See Lowe (1990, 274–297), W.G. Arnott (1996, 286–287). A similar, and perhaps influential, diminution in the tragic chorus occurred in the works of the tragedian Agathon (Aristotle *Poetics* 1456a30; Blume 1990, 33–34). Rothwell (1995, 112) points out that while Menander did not incorporate the chorus into the action, this proves nothing about the technique of other New Comedy writers.

[74] See further Pöhlmann (1991, 349–359), R. Hunter (1979, 23–38), Zagagi (1994, 72–76).

[75] The fact that their interventions between subsequent acts find no reference in the text may suggest that they remained present in the orchestra throughout the action, but provides little clue as to the moment of their exit (Zagagi 1994, 75–76; Pöhlmann 1991, 356). Commentators mostly presume an entry and exit by the chorus at each interval. Brown (1990b, 150), however, argues that the procession at the end of *Dyskolos* would have been less effective if it had involved only the personnel of the stage.

the fields, inform his master of what he has just seen, and return to the vicinity of the shrine. Similarly, the tedium mentioned by Getas at 435–436 highlights the length of stage time that is supposed to have passed between his entry into the shrine at 426, at the end of act II, and the arrival of Sostratos' mother in act III. Likewise, in the interval between acts IV and V, we are given to suppose that Sostratos has had sufficient time to broach with his father the subject of his own marriage and the one he plans as a reward for Gorgias. In other plays the suggested passage of time is even greater, a whole night between acts II and III of *Epitrepontes* (cf. Terence's *Heautontimorumenos* 410), if the interpretation of Sandbach is accepted.[76] Elsewhere, however, the time span involved need be no more than that taken up by the chorus' performance. *Dyskolos* acts III to IV is a case in point, where the link monologue of Getas, followed by the arrival onstage of Sostratos and Gorgias, their departure into the shrine, and the intervention of the chorus ostensibly provide sufficient time for Knemon to attempt the descent into the well and have his accident.[77] Breaks in the action created by intervention of the chorus do on occasion, though, fulfil a dramatic as well as a technical function, in that they can tantalise the audience as it waits to see the outcome of recent developments, while at the same time providing the potential for an entertaining contrast between the final events of the previous act and what we presume was the levity of the choral performance. Both of these are well represented at the end of act I of *Dyskolos* when, after a monologue in which Daos criticises Knemon for leaving his daughter a prey to the attentions of any passing stranger, he exits to report what he has seen to his master Gorgias (Knemon's stepson). Not only is the audience left wondering how Gorgias will deal with this potentially difficult situation,[78] but also it is entertained by the contrast between this and the approach of a band of drunken devotees of Pan.[79]

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[76] Sandbach (1986, 156–158), contra W.G. Arnott (1987, 19–31; 1988, 26).

[77] We need to bear in mind, however, that representing the passage of time to allow offstage action to take place was not restricted to the choral odes. Monologues such as that of the cook Sikon at *Dyskolos* 639–665 can also perform this function, and we should be on our guard against imposing upon the plays of Menander a formalism which reference to the plays themselves shows to be unjustified.

[78] The audience is already aware of the problem that the girl's father presents to anyone approaching him, even in a friendly manner, and in addition can appreciate the gulf that separates Daos' interpretation of the meeting that Sostratos has with Knemon's daughter and the reality of his honourable intentions.

[79] See further Zagagi (1994, 73–74) for a discussion of the first choral entry in *Aspis*, which has the added distinction of the chorus actually being addressed by the slave Daos.

c. *Prologues*

For the playwright in antiquity, the beginning of a play called for the exercise of particular care if it was to succeed in both its dramatic and technical functions. On the dramatic level, the prologue had as its primary purpose exposition—that is, setting the scene for the action to come, introducing the characters who will appear before the audience, and establishing the situation upon which the plot is based.[80] To modern audiences, such a technique may appear a blatantly artificial device, but within the history of drama, it is not uncommon and is certainly more entertaining than the programme notes that today fulfil the same function. In its ancient context, indeed, the expository prologue proved a succinct means of avoiding what Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 133) describe as "the difficulty of smuggling into the dialogue facts needed more for the audience's sake than for that of the characters". This is especially necessary in a genre like New Comedy, where plays were relatively short, as the later Roman writer Terence was to discover to his cost when he attempted to abandon the expository prologue altogether and force his audience to glean details of the underlying situation from the action itself. But in order to convey to the audience those details upon which the plot is based, the prologue also had to succeed in its technical function: to attract and then retain the audience's attention and goodwill at the very point in the play where the whole basis of subsequent action is being established. This was no easy task in a theatre that was entirely out-of-doors and relied solely upon the sun for its lighting, a theatre in which the dramatic illusion was consequently far more fragile, if it existed at all. For this reason the prologue speaker frequently exists only partially within the dramatic situation, with the actor merging gradually into the stage character (*Aspis* 97 ff., *Dyskolos* 1 ff.) and then reemerging as actor for the *captatio benevolentiae*, the appeal for the audience's favour, as at *Dyskolos* 45–46, *Perikeiromene* 170–171, and *Sikyonios* 23–24.

Though use of the prologue for exposition is typical of much of New Comedy, it was not the invariable format for introducing information. In

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Such interventions indeed can contrast not only with what precedes (the cook's comically gloomy reaction to the loss of an engagement as a result of Kleostratos' reported death) but also with what follows, the further gloom created by Smikrines' plans to marry his niece.

[80] In the case of plays like *Aspis* and *Perikeiromene*, the prologue even provides information as to how the plot will turn out. For Menander's technique of exposition in general, see especially Holzberg (1974, 6 f.), Cusset (2003, 53–81).

other plays—usually those based on intrigue—the same function could be fulfilled by a dialogue, such as that between the slaves Tranio and Grumio in Plautus' *Mostellaria*. And even when there was a prologue, it might not form the opening scene, but be deferred to a later position, as happens with Menander's *Aspis* and was presumably the case in *Epitrepontes*, *Misoumenos*, and *Perikeiromene*. Such deferral indeed offered significant opportunities for puzzling or even shocking the audience before the relief that came with revelation of the truth. But who were the prologue speakers? On its simplest level, exposition might be provided by one of the human characters involved in the action, such as the young man Moschion in *Samia*, whose description of his recent behaviour contains the essential information upon which subsequent action is based. More commonly, however, Menander seems to have preferred the injection of a divine element such as Pan in *Dyskolos*, Tyche (Chance) in *Aspis*,[81] or the personified abstraction Agnoia (Misapprehension) in *Perikeiromene*. One aspect shared by nearly all plays containing a superhuman prologue speaker, though, was the revelation to the audience of some important information unknown to the humans involved in the action, very often the true origin of one of the characters. Such revelation then allowed full rein to New Comedy's major effect, dramatic irony, when the audience's superior knowledge enabled it to appreciate the mistaken thought processes and resultant embarrassment of the stage characters.[82] A prime example of this can be seen in *Aspis*, the plot of which is based on attempts to thwart the plans of Smikrines to acquire the estate of his nephew, believed to have been killed in action. What neither Smikrines nor those acting against him know—unlike the audience—is that the young man in question is far from dead and will soon return to save the day. Similarly, in *Perikeiromene* the salient point of dramatic irony is that the cause of the play's complication, Moschion's stolen kiss and Polemon's violent reaction against his mistress Glykera, is something of a red herring, designed to bring about not only Glykera's reunion with her family

[81] The role of chance in the works of Menander is fully explored by Vogt-Spira (1992); cf. Lefèvre (1979, 320–328). The role of the divine element as a whole within the dramatic action is well discussed by Zagagi (1994, 142–168).

[82] That the development of dramatic irony is not restricted only to plays involving divine prologue speakers is amply shown by *Samia*, where the audience is able to appreciate the depth of Demeas' inaccurate interpretation of the situation he finds on his return home because of the details given by Moschion. The difference lies in the degree of misapprehension—the fact that in *Samia* it does not involve all the human characters involved.

but also, through this, citizenship and marriage. In a play like *Dyskolos*, in contrast, the necessity for a divine prologue has been severely questioned. Are there any details provided by Pan that are unknown to the human characters involved and allow the audience greater insight into the situation as it develops, or would a human prologue speaker such as Moschion in *Samia* have served just as well? Ostensibly the only factor unknown to all stage characters is the divine inspiration of Sostratos' feelings for Knemon's daughter, but, as Schäfer[83] has pointed out, love hardly needs such superhuman instigation. To restrict Pan's role to this alone, however, would underestimate his true value in a number of respects. (1) At the beginning of a play centred upon two families who have not yet begun to interact, it is only Pan who can introduce all the important characters. (2) The god's objective view allows Knemon's misanthropy to be seen from the very beginning as an essential factor in his character and not merely a symptom of insanity, as Pyrrhias believes, or of transient ill humour, as Chaireas suggests. (3) The divine inspiration of Sostratos' love allows Menander to develop the theme of natural justice—in this case an advantageous marriage for the girl as the reward for her piety—which runs through many of the playwright's plots. (4) A role for Pan at the beginning of the action facilitates the introduction of dramatic irony throughout the play by the insertion of what in isolation seem irrelevant references to the god and Sostratos' tendency to appropriate to himself responsibility for a marriage we realise is the work of others.

Because the prologue was the foundation of many plays, it is here that we find the clearest evidence of careful planning by the playwright in terms of structure, theme, and language. Careful structuring can be seen in the order in which characters and salient factors are introduced in the *Dyskolos* prologue, not least the contrast between town and country, typified by the fact that the two fathers, Knemon and Kallippides, form the outer frame, within which Gorgias and Sostratos establish their own framework: Gorgias provides the link between his stepfather Knemon and Sostratos, while Sostratos acts as the link between Gorgias and his own father in the final act.[84] Similarly, the avoidance of details before they become dramatically relevant accounts for the fact that of all the human characters in the play, only Knemon is specifically named in the

[83] Schäfer (1965, 33–34).

[84] This feature is well developed by Ramage (1966, 194–211); cf. Ireland (1995, 109–110).

prologue, and at the important position of first word in the line.[85] In terms of language, the need for conciseness in the presentation of complex situations, while maintaining clarity of presentation, often resulted in a syntactic structure more elaborate than found elsewhere in the action compounded with a heavy reliance upon such stylistic features as enjambement.[86]

7. *Influences on the Plays*

a. *Earlier Comedy*

New Comedy marks the final product of a process of fusion and development that had been progressing for much of the fourth century, a process involving not simply comedy but also elements from tragedy and philosophy. Old Comedy, populated with often thinly disguised caricatures of prominent figures and with its emphasis upon the topical and political, had faded out of existence in the early decades of the century, giving rise to the transitional period of Middle Comedy, little of which survives. The fact, though, that Menander is closely linked with one of the genre's most important playwrights, Alexis, provides prima facie evidence for a direct connection between the two forms. Common sense indeed tells us that New Comedy marks the final destination of the middle period and that, far from marking a major shift, it brought to completion themes of plot and character that had been evolving over a considerable time. The less direct influence of Old Comedy upon Menander should not, however, be altogether discounted. The injection of slapstick and exaggerated language, for instance, together with plots culminating in revels and betrothals, all hark back to the fifth-century comic form.[87] Where they differ lies primarily in their approach to the chorus or the universalisation of the plot and its characters.

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[85] Cf. *Aspis*, where only Kleostratos is named. Even more striking is the fact that in the extant sections of *Perikeiromene*'s prologue, only the speaker (Agnoia) is named; all the other participants in the situation are identified instead by more roundabout means.

[86] Ireland (1981, 178–188). On prologues in general, see further R. Hunter (1985, 24–35), Dworacki (1973, 33–47).

[87] So, for instance, while the prominence of characters like the cook and parasite are clearly traceable to Middle Comedy, as are several features of New Comedy plots, characters such as the boastful soldier and hetaira have an even longer pedigree. See further W.G. Arnott (1975b, 10–11), R. Hunter (1985, 8–13), Blume (1990), Astorga (1990, ch. 2), and Arnott's chapter above, section 8b.

b. *Tragedy*

Despite the apparently irreconcilable differences between the two genres, comedy of all periods viewed tragedy as a useful source of borrowable material in terms of language, dramatic technique, and even themes. In some respects, indeed, the tragic theatre had itself pointed the way through plays involving either a happy ending, like Euripides' *Helen*, a domestic theme such as that of *Alcestis*, or the shifts in technique attributed to Agathon. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a number of Menander's plays deal with themes that had long been established as part of the repertoire of tragedy, in particular the works of Euripides, which were frequently restaged in the fourth century. This was recognised even in antiquity, as Satyrus records in his biography of the tragic playwright.[88] It is especially the case with plays like *Epitrepontes*, which is founded upon the problems created by the existence of a seemingly illegitimate child, or *Perikeiromene*, the ultimate aim of which is the reunion of a girl with her long-lost father so that she can benefit from a proper marriage. The Euripidean analogy is perhaps best exemplified in *Ion*, the plot of which concerns the intrusion of a seemingly illegitimate child into the marriage of Creusa and Xuthus, while the play's actual goal is the reunion of Ion with his mother Creusa, who had been forced to abandon her son years before as the product of rape by the god Apollo. Whereas, however, the complications of Ion are set in the mythological past and centre upon Creusa's unwitting attempts to kill her son before the two are reunited through recognition of their kinship, in the New Comedy context this is replaced by a contemporary social setting and threats to either an already existing marriage or marriage prospects.[89] In other contexts we see the playwright mirroring

[88] See above, "Parameters of Knowledge". The surviving plays of Menander cite lines of Euripides at points like *Aspis* 407, 424–425, 432, *Epitrepontes* 1123–1124, *Samia* 325–326, with further echoes of tragedy seen at *Epitrepontes* 910, *Sikyonios* 176–177, *Aspis* 411, 412–413, 415, 416–418, 425–426. At times, in fact, the moralising tone of speeches by Menander and Euripides on life's variability seems so close as to be indistinguishable.

[89] Themes that had already figured on the tragic stage are well detailed by Webster (1974, 57–67). Tragic situations developed by the comic stage include the arbitration scene of *Epitrepontes*, with its echoes of Euripides' *Alope*, and Kleostratos' return in *Aspis*, which has a precedent in Euripides' *Helen*, or recognition scenes, most notably those in *Perikeiromene* Act IV with its additional use of birth tokens, *Misoumenos* 210–215, and *Sikyonios* 368 ff., in all of which fathers are reunited with daughters they had lost sometime before, or *Epitrepontes* with its multiple episodes of recognition: ring, baby's father, baby's mother. For the analogy from the tragic stage, we need look no further than the Electra plays.

tragic technique through visual images (the introduction of Knemon's daughter in search of water at *Dyskolos* 189, which some see as recalling Euripides' *Electra*, or the appearance onstage of Knemon after his accident, which echoes the wounded hero of tragedy—e.g., Euripides' *Hippolytos* 1347 ff.), language (the quasi messenger speech at *Sikyonios* 176–271, with its echoes of Euripides' *Orestes* 866 ff.),[90] the use of tragic metrical structure or the strict line responsion of stichomythia at moments of high tension (*Misoumenos* 210–215, *Perikeiromene* 779–809), and the introduction of expository prologues. There are even direct references to tragedy at *Epitrepontes* 325–333 ("You've seen tragedies, of course you have, and you know all this") or *Samia* 589–591 ("Tell me, Nikeratos, haven't you heard the tragic actors telling how Zeus turned himself into gold").[91] Clearly the playwright saw much in tragedy that could be of positive benefit for the development of New Comedy effects, but by the same token, he was also careful to ensure that any event with tragic potential was not allowed to exist for long unrelieved by the injection of balancing comic effect—for instance, the attempted interventions of the cook in Demeas' expulsion of Chrysis at *Samia* 369–398, which paradoxically allow development of a greater degree of viciousness from the old man than would otherwise have been possible in a comedy. In contrast, there are instances where the playwright's aim was more clearly the burlesque of parody, for instance at *Aspis* 407–428, where Daos' quotation of tragic lines is deliberately used to produce a mock-tragic atmosphere as part of the plan to deceive Smikrines; *Epitrepontes* 1123–1124, where quotation of Euripides' *Auge* is designed through the analogy involved to highlight Smikrines' continuing obtuseness; and perhaps too Demeas' outburst at *Samia* 325 ff., where, when realising its inappropriateness, the old man pulls himself up short.

c. *Philosophy*

That philosophy had a formative effect on Menander's work should come as no surprise. The society into which the playwright was born had felt the influence of the philosophic schools for decades, and for a young

[90] See further Katsouris (1975b, 29–57), W.G. Arnott (1986, 3–6), Poole (1978, 56–62).

[91] See further Zagagi (1994, 50–57), R. Hunter (1985, 114–136), Hurst (1990, 93–122), Krieter-Spiro (1997, 138 ff.), Cusset (2003). A problem that needs constantly to be borne in mind, however, is the possibility of seeing tragic echoes where none was consciously intended by the playwright (Hurst 1990, 99).

man from an upper-class background, higher education in one of them was as natural as university is today. In Menander's case his traditional association with the Peripatetic teachings of Theophrastus is hardly to be questioned. Time and again throughout the plays, there is evidence of an ethos and approach to life that clearly points to the teachings of the Lyceum in general (most notably Aristotelian ethics)[92] and what little we know of Theophrastus in particular. On a fairly mundane level, for instance, Sostratos' picture of his mother's superstitious nature at *Dyskolos* 260–263 strikes a chord with Theophrastus' description of the superstitious type at *Characters* 16, and it is likely that the approach to character underlying Theophrastus' work was a contributory factor in Menander's general approach to the figures that populate his plays (R. Hunter 1985, 148–151). More pervasive are the themes of general philanthropy and natural justice, together with the advisability of taking the middle course, as in Sostratos' platitudinous attitude to wealth at *Dyskolos* 797–812 and the reward he plans for Gorgias, Gorgias' recognition of Sostratos' moral worth at 764–771, or Demeas' lecture to his adopted son Moschion at *Samia* 695–712. What we must not do, though, is treat the plays as philosophical treatises; the philosophical element is there for the sake of the drama, not vice versa. Yet, while an overt philosophical stance is not to be sought from the plays, they do at times provide fertile ground for the depiction of moral principles. However, as W.G. Arnott (1981, 215 ff.) points out, these principles are to be viewed in the twin contexts of the dramas themselves and the susceptibilities of the audience, rather than as personal statements by the playwright.[93]

[92] Gaiser (1967, 8–40), Gigante (1971a, 461–484), Barigazzi (1965), Webster (1974, 49–50) emphasise the connection between the Aristotelian scale of damages (*Nicomachaean Ethics* 1135b11) and many of the themes within the plays; Fortenbaugh (1974, 430–443), M. Anderson (1970, 199–217).

[93] That philosophic elements are not to be taken primarily as social comment or propaganda is graphically illustrated by Knemon's tirade at *Dyskolos* 447–453 against the selfishness he regards to be inherent in sacrifices ostensibly made for the benefit of the gods. The fact that this is placed into the mouth of so unsociable and unsympathetic a character undercuts any attempt to see it as mirroring the views of Theophrastus in his work *On Piety*: that the character of the giver is more important in the eyes of the gods than the opulence of the sacrifice. On another level Menander was not above using a mish-mash of popular philosophical ideas in the creation of comedy—Onesimos' speech to Smikrines at *Epitrepontes* 1087–1099, for instance.

8. *Some Aspects of Menandrian Technique*[94]

As with all great dramatists, Menander's skill is often displayed most clearly in his reaction to and exploitation of the conventions within which he operated. To the modern mind, some of these may seem unduly restrictive, and not all may have operated in every circumstance, but our awareness of them helps to underpin any appreciation of the playwright's work.

Actors: It is generally accepted that the plays of Menander followed the tragic convention of using only three speaking actors. True, there is little external evidence to corroborate this, but equally there is no extant scene that requires more than three speaking parts.[95] Such a restriction does, however, impose a number of desperate problems upon the action. The most obvious is the necessity for actors to play more than one part. The argument around this emphasises the feasibility of such multiple roles in a theatre where masks were worn and where the convention of an all-male cast meant that vocal dexterity was a standard requirement for all actors,[96] but even so, the complexity of dialogue in some acts has continued to worry commentators, necessitating as it does some extremely rapid changes of costume and mask. One can point to the fact that Menander often seeks to minimise this by staggering exits (characters leaving the stage sequentially in order to effect the change of costume and mask),[97] but this leaves a not inconsiderable residue of

[94] Within the scope of this chapter, I can only touch upon some of the more wide-ranging features employed by Menander.

[95] Frost (1988, 2–5), Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 16–19), Sandbach (1975), Blume (1998, 64–74). The nearest external evidence consists of the inscriptions mentioning three comic actors at the Soteria festival at Delphi in the early third century (*SIG*^{3} 424). Instances suggesting a fourth actor have generally been edited out of the manuscripts—for example, *Dyskolos* 214–217, originally interpreted as spoken by the slave Pyrrhias are now rightly seen as self-address by Sostratos, or perhaps the closing scenes of *Perikeiromene* in which the lines ostensibly given to Glykera (1021 ff., 1023) are generally assigned instead to Pataikos (Gomme-Sandbach 1973, 529–530), though contrast most recently Arnott Loeb II ad loc., who continues to give Glykera a speaking part. Another technique employed to cover the limitation was the use either of mutes—as at *Epitrepontes* 1062 ff., where Sophrone's reactions to Smikrines are clearly portrayed through mime (Blume 1998, 122–123; cf. Webster 1974, 82–83)—or of empty stages that allowed changes of costume and mask (Bellardinelli 1990, 45–60).

[96] Wiles (1991, 220–222).

[97] For instance, *Dyskolos* 378 ff., where first Daos leaves in order to change role into that of the cook Sikon, followed by Gorgias who becomes the slave Getas, and finally Sostratos. W.G. Arnott (1989a, 3–5), in contrast, proposes a simultaneous exit for Gorgias and Sostratos so that the change of costume and mask becomes even more rushed, thus

instances where the only feasible solution requires a character part to be shared by two actors.[98]

Characters:[99] The range of characters within New Comedy is surprisingly small, centred upon one or more families (parents, offspring, and slaves) together with the traditional so-called professional figures with whom they interact (cooks, soldiers, hetairai, pimps, and the like). No less restricted are the names attached to some characters,[100] creating the potential danger of tedious monotony. But just as Menander produces many of his finest effects by the injection of unexpected twists of plot and technique, so his characters are also capable of presenting what is novel within the ambit of the familiar. That is, Menander often seems to take what we might regard as the Middle Comedy stereotype and to create surprise by reversing expected traits. Among the best examples of such variation is the depiction of soldiers. Before the rediscovery of Menander, Roman comedy suggested that the comic soldier was regularly a caricature, a blustering buffoon whose major role was to act as rival to the young hero.[101] The main Menandrian examples, however, turn out to be far more individual, and, as Arnott[102] aptly observes, they are often given traits that cut across typological boundaries to become figures deserving our sympathy rather than ridicule. Yet in such cases, the typical elements of the comic soldier were not to be lost altogether; instead, Menander simply transferred them elsewhere—in the case of *Perikeiromene*, to the slave Sosias and the young man Moschion. This same flexibility can be

injecting into Getas' entry a haste that the audience might appreciate as appropriate to both the character and the actor.

[98] Sandbach (1975; 1977, 78–80). See further Walton-Arnott (1996, 66–67), who remain unconvinced that Menander wrote for a cast of three speaking actors; Handley (1965, 25–30) assumes a fourth actor for *Dyskolos*.

[99] The literature on characters and characterisation in Menander is itself enormous; the more significant works include the work of MacCary (1969, 277–294; 1970, 277–290; 1971, 303–325; 1972, 279–298), Brown (2003–2004), W.G. Arnott (1975a, 140–155; 1979, 343–360), Dohm (1964), Walton-Arnott (1996, ch. 5), Henry (1985), Zagagi (1994, 29), Krieter-Spiro (1997), Hurst (2004, 55–70), Feneron (1976). A full bibliography is found in Katsouris (1995, 78–82).

[100] So, for instance, Moschion in *Samia*, *Kitharistes*, *Perikeiromene*, *Sikyonios*, *Fabula Incerta*; Smikrines in *Aspis*, *Epitrepontes*; Daos in *Aspis*, *Dyskolos*, *Epitrepontes*, *Heros*, *Georgos*, *Kolax*, *Perikeiromene*; Chaireas in *Aspis*, *Dyskolos*, *Koneazomenai*; Sostratos in *Dis Exapaton*, *Dyskolos*; Syros in *Dis Exapaton*, *Phasma*; Gorgias in *Georgos*, *Dyskolos*, *Heros*; Demeas in *Misoumenos*, *Samia*. The list is by no means exhaustive.

[101] So, for instance, Pyrgopolyneices in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*; cf. Thraso in Terence's *Eunuchus*; Duckworth (1952, 264). The stereotype of the boastful soldier can be seen in the remains of Menander's *Kolax* (Arnott, Loeb II 188–189).

[102] W.G. Arnott (1968, 15–17; 1979, 353–357).

seen too in other contexts. In *Epitrepontes*, for instance, it is the hetaira Habrotonon who takes on the role of schemer more normally reserved for the male slave, while Onesimos can only bewail his incapacity for such ingenuity at 557 ff. And often it is through their idiosyncratic traits of language that this individualisation is given substance.[103]

The variety of character form injected by Menander into types, and which rescues the figures who populate his plays from the charge of monotony, is also visible within individual characters. Some might regard this as an element of inconsistency, but we need to bear in mind that the creation of drama is organic; it evolves to meet the needs of the moment. That such evolution does not jar is a mark of Menander's skill, just as it is in the case of other writers like Aeschylus and Sophocles. A prime example is Daos in *Aspis*, whose character moves from the solemn bearer of tragic news at the play's opening, through noncommittal diplomacy in the face of Smikrines' attempts to involve him in his schemes, to what Goldberg (1980, 40) calls straight man to the cook and waiter at the end of act I, schemer in act II and purveyor of broad parodying humour in act III. We do not notice the shift in performance since in every case the adaptation can be seen as a natural reaction by the slave to changed circumstances.[104]

The seductive skill with which Menander induces his audience to accept his characters as individuals, often on the basis of what is now fragmentary evidence,[105] should not blind us to the fact that they remain essentially constructs. Their personal traits exist not as self-generated factors, but as deliberately crafted elements designed for the specific purpose of interaction with other, no less fabricated, entities. It is not the haphazard reality of psychology that lies behind what we see, but rather a complex jigsaw of interlocking features deliberately designed to lead to the happy ending. By keeping this in mind, we may be dissuaded from too ready a tendency to inject features that have little or no basis in the text. A further problem that attaches to Menander's treatment of characters

[103] The use of language for depicting character is dealt with by Feneron (1976), Sandbach (1970, 113–136), Katsouris (1975a, 101–126), Brenk (1987, 33–66), W.G. Arnott (1995, 147–164), Krieter-Spiro (1997, 201).

[104] Cf. Knemon in *Dyskolos*. While his character does not alter fundamentally during the course of the action, our perception of his misanthropy does undergo a radical shift of focus between the prologue and his apologia at 708 ff.

[105] A prime example is Glykera in *Perikeiromene*, whose assertion of self-esteem has often made a considerable impact, despite the fact that it is based on the fragmentary remains at the beginning of Act IV (see further *Perikeiromene*, below).

is more historically based: the extent of his own innovation compared to what he assumed from the comic tradition he inherited. For though it is clear that many of the actual characters involved already existed in Middle Comedy, what we cannot be certain of is how exactly they were used there (see Arnott in the previous chapter).

Mirror scenes and other repeated motifs: An important and widespread element in Menander's comedy is the repetition of situations and motifs in order to bring out a variety of effect, whether this is to contrast the serious and the comic, emphasise character differences, produce a degree of symmetry within the action and a gradation of plot elaboration, or produce any combination of these.[106] The most significant vehicle for conveying such repetition is the use of mirror scenes, where events in one act are deliberately reflected by those of another. A prime example of employing such scenes to develop the contrast between the serious and the purely comic comes in *Dyskolos*. In act III attempts are made by the cook Sikon and the slave Getas to borrow cooking equipment from Knemon in order to meet a real need, but are rebuffed by the old man with threats and violence. The same routine is later repeated in act V, though this time the aim is more the creation of humour, as Sikon and Getas take turns to make blatantly exaggerated demands for equipment from a Knemon whose accident down the well has reduced him to physical helplessness.[107] This type of repetition, combined with an element of character differentiation, we see again in *Samia* through the contrasting reactions of Demeas and Nikeratos to the discoveries they make concerning the apparent parentage of a baby. That of Demeas in act III, which results from overhearing the burblings of his son's old nurse, is marked by suppressed fury and forced control aimed at both concealing the outrage he believes has been committed against him and preserving the reputation of his son, despite the ostensible evidence of an affair between the young man and Demeas' own partner, Chrysis. In act IV, at 532 ff., the other father figure of the play, Nikeratos, makes a not dissimilar discovery, this time linking the baby to his daughter. The reaction this provokes,

[106] This aspect of Menander's technique is dealt with in detail by Zagagi (1994, ch. 4).

[107] A further example of this type comes in the two reported deaths of *Aspis*. In the opening scene, the slave Daos describes the death of his young master Kleostratos, a report taken at face value. Later we witness the mirror image burlesqued by Daos in the outrageous pretence surrounding the supposed death of Chairestratos in Act III, aimed as it is at deflecting Smikrines from his schemes. As Zagagi (1994, 83) observes, the contrasted scenes also have a dramatic value in showing Smikrines, who earlier plotted against his nephew, now the target of a plot by his nephew's slave.

however, reveals an altogether different personality, one given to portrayal on a level of pure unrestrained farce as he dashes about threatening to reveal his family's disgrace to all and sundry.[108]

In terms of dramatic structure, too, the creation of symmetry is an important factor in a number of plays—not least *Samia*, with Moschion's defence of Chrysis and the baby against the threat of expulsion in act II balanced later by similar efforts in act IV, though with totally divergent results, or the actual expulsion scenes of acts III and IV. In the first of these (369 ff.), the overwhelming effect is one of vindictive venom from Demeas, alleviated only by the attempted intervention of the cook and the refuge subsequently provided by Nikeratos. In the second (547 ff.), Nikeratos' threatened actions and constant agitation achieve the same result (with Demeas now providing the refuge) but in an altogether more comic atmosphere.

Repetition for the purpose of plot elaboration can also be seen in *Dyskolos* in the frantic appearances of the old woman Simiche at 574 ff. and 620 ff., the first played out before the slave Getas to announce the loss of the mattock down the well, the second before the cook Sikon to reveal Knemon's fall into the same well.

Contrast: In addition to balance, Menander also shows himself to be a master of contrast, which often enables him to employ dramatic devices and achieve effects that would normally lie beyond the orbit of comedy. As mentioned above, the expulsion of Chrysis from Demeas' house at *Samia* 369 ff., with its overtones of viciousness, would be unacceptably dark but for the presence and attempted interference of the comic cook, just as the asides from Moschion during the recognition scene of *Perikeiromene* (783–784, 787, 792–793, 819, 822) take some of the edge off the tragic rehearsal of infant exposure.[109] On a lighter note, the use of contrast allows Menander to surprise his audience with unexpected developments, many of which are specifically designed to forward the plot. So, for instance, at the end of *Epitrepontes* act II, the slave Onesimos determines to show his master Charisios the ring he has extracted from Syros, a ring associated with a foundling baby. At the beginning of act III, however, this plan has clearly collapsed in the face of Charisios' hostility towards the slave for revealing the very factor that led to

[108] A similarly contrasted reaction displaying the character difference of the two fathers comes at the very end of the play in their response to Moschion's pretence of going abroad: Demeas marked by sympathetic understanding, Nikeratos by threats and bluster.

[109] Cf. the contrast between the anxiety of Knemon's daughter at having to get water from the shrine and Sostratos' lovesick asides at *Dyskolos* 189 ff.

the breakup of his marriage. Onesimos, the figure we might earlier have expected to be the cunning slave who masterminds the resolution of the plot, is thus abruptly ruled out of account and reduced to the role of mere spectator, his dramatic function now taken over by the music girl Habrotonon. And the role of Habrotonon herself is not without its own contrasts. Initially she seems little more than the outer manifestation of a broken marriage, hired to alleviate Charisios' depression at having to leave his wife Pamphile, who has given birth to an illegitimate child; yet ultimately she becomes the agent of the marriage's salvation. Later in the play, when Onesimos describes his master's reaction to overhearing Pamphile's defence of her marriage at 878 ff. in the face of her father's attempts to engineer a divorce, the audience is prepared for the appearance onstage of a Charisios teetering on the brink of insanity. Yet when the young husband does appear at 908, his self-description is marked more by the coldness of self-disgust as he berates himself for hypocrisy in rejecting a wife who was the victim of rape, yet he has discovered that he is the perpetrator of just such an act.[110]

Elsewhere we see contrast employed in the pacing of events in order to highlight a variety of effects: the wistful musings of the old nurse at *Samia* 236 ff. amidst all the bustle of wedding preparations. Different too is the effect derived from contrasting an image with its literary norm: the picture of Thrasonides at *Misoumenos* A1 ff. ostensibly delivering the lover's paraklausithyron lament before the locked door of his beloved, were it not for the fact that the door in question is his own. No less important, of course, is the widespread use of contrast that flows naturally from dramatic irony, the contrast between a character's misapprehension of a situation and its reality. In this Polemon's reaction in *Perikeiromene* to the kiss stolen from his mistress Glykera by the young man Moschion (who we know is actually her brother) provides a vivid example.[111] On a wider basis, there is also the contrast of themes: between town and country, as in *Dyskolos*,[112] rich and poor, as in Georgos, male and female, as in *Epitrepontes*, slave and free at *Aspis*

[110] Other examples of Menander deliberately introducing one possible line of development, only to reject it in favour of another, include the reference to a love plot based on rape inherent in Gorgias' charge at *Dyskolos* 289 ff., only to divert this to the more honourable theme of marriage in Sostratos' defence of his actions (W.G. Arnott 1981, 226–227).

[111] Other large-scale examples are the misinterpretation of information underpinning the entire plots of plays like *Misoumenos*, *Aspis*, *Samia*, and *Epitrepontes*.

[112] Ramage (1966, 194–211).

189–209,[113] or the contrast between forecast behaviour and reality, as in the expectation of Demeas accepting the situation he will find on his return (*Samia* 80–83) and what actually happens (130–134).[114]

Economy: The brevity of New Comedy plays, which often developed complex plots within the ambit of at times less than a thousand lines, was a clear incentive to dramatic economy, designed to achieve a variety of effect from a single event. This need was most clearly felt in scenes of considerable tension or pathos, where a more naturalistic and discursive approach would detract from the overall result. Take for instance the recognition scene between Pataikos and Glykera in *Perikeiromene*, 779–827. Throughout, the emphasis lies with father and daughter, developing to the maximum the tragic tale of infant exposure[115] (even delaying the formal recognition to 825, though it has been inherently acknowledged since 800 ff. and was implicitly admitted at 800 in order to maximise the effect). Yet there is a second recognition to bring about, that of Glykera's brother Moschion. But by keeping him in the background as an eavesdropper[116] upon the father-daughter dialogue, Menander is able to secure the emphasis he wants while ensuring that by the end of the scene, the whole family is reunited.

On another level Menander produces his desired dramatic effect by attributing to characters knowledge beyond what logic indicates they can have had. So, for instance, at *Samia* 695 ff. it is clear that Demeas immediately sees to the heart of his son's peeved annoyance, though there is nothing in the script to suggest why; Menander is simply building on what the audience has already seen. Similarly, at *Dyskolos* 358–359 Gorgias forecasts Knemon's return to work in the fields; yet there is nothing to suggest that he saw the old man come home early, but the audience did. Related to this is the way Menander uses economy to achieve his effect by simply omitting any elements that might detract from the dramatic needs of the moment. A clear example is the pace and lack of extraneous developments with which Stratophanes hints at

[113] The telling irony of a foreign slave, Daos, questioning Smikrines' application of the Athenian law on heiresses to his niece, yet clearly having natural justice on his side.

[114] Ireland (1983, 45–47).

[115] The "tragic" element is emphasised by the use of formal techniques more usually associated with tragedy itself—for example, the application of the stricter, tragic rules of metre and the stichomythic alternation of lines, the regularity of which is often maintained by the insertion of "filler" material (Gomme-Sandbach 1973, ad loc.; Ireland 1981, 178–188).

[116] Moschion's asides in the scene are discussed by Bain (1977, 113–117).

marriage as soon as he is introduced to Philoumene's recently discovered father at *Sikyonios* 377–381. Other instances become apparent in the speed with which a theme is ended once it has been fully explored. Take, for instance, the marriage Sostratos proposes in *Dyskolos* act V as a reward for the help Gorgias has given him. Gorgias himself overhears the plan (itself an economic device that obviates the need for repetition) and politely declines it (825–829). Within fifteen lines, however, all his resistance has crumbled, not because of any weakness in the principled stand he takes against benefiting from the labour of others, but because its further development not only would be dramatically otiose but also would slow the pace in the closing scenes of the play.[117]

Economy is also effectively produced by reintroducing as a significant factor something that earlier seemed employed only for local colour. The theme of sacrifice arranged by Sostratos' mother in *Dyskolos* is a case in point. At first it is seen as no more than a nuisance preventing the young man from enlisting the help of his slave Getas (259 ff.). Later, however, it reemerges as the crucial dramatic factor. For while it ostensibly impedes the marriage that the young man yearns for by robbing him of the opportunity to impress Knemon with his labour, it ultimately brings that marriage to fruition by leading to the removal of Knemon as an obstacle and allowing Sostratos to impress instead his new friend Gorgias, to whom the old man hands over responsibility for finding the girl a husband. In this way the playwright is able to build upon something already familiar to produce a new and unexpected development. Then again, on a more traditional level, the very existence of monologues allows the revelation of information in a far shorter compass than a more naturalistic stage technique would permit.[118]

9. *The Major Plays*

a. *The Love Theme*

"There is no play by that delightful writer Menander that lacks love" wrote Ovid (*Tristia* II 369), a verdict enlarged upon by numerous other writers in antiquity,[119] but while love lies at the heart of the playwright's

[117] Cf. the speed with which Megadorus' resistance to marriage crumbles in Plautus' *Aulularia* 170–171, once the comic potential of that resistance has been fully exploited.

[118] The monologues of Menander are analysed in detail by Blundell (1980).

[119] Plutarch *Moralia* 712C; Stobaeus *Eclogae* IV 20a, 34; Manilius *Astronomicon*

works, providing the element upon which the action is founded, it is not the major interest. Rather, this lies in the obstacle to the realisation of that love or its continuance. The love theme itself within the plays of Menander displays considerable variety:[120]

1. The love of a young man for a girl prior to assuming the responsibilities of adulthood and marriage is the depiction most frequently encountered within the extant plays and can itself be divided into two subgroups:

a. Those which emphasise the honourable intentions of the young man in question (*Dyskolos* 306–313, *Aspis* 290–293).
b. Those in which the girl falls victim to rape[121] (Plangon in *Samia* and *Heros*, Myrrhine's daughter in *Georgos*, and Kleainetos' daughter in *Fabula Incerta*).[122]

V 471 ff. The theme of love in New Comedy has been thoroughly investigated most recently by Rosivach (1998); cf. W.S. Anderson (1984, 124–134). For the language of love, see Flury (1968). Plutarch (*Moralia* 712C) also points out that love in Menander is consistently heterosexual, something that contrasts strongly with the evidence of Diphilus' work (see n. 33 above).

[120] This was recognised even in antiquity—for example, Plutarch *Moralia* 712C (trans. Minar): "When virgins are seduced the play usually ends with a marriage; while affairs with casual women, if they are aggressive and shameless, are cut short by some chastening experience or repentance on the young man's part, and good girls who give love for love either find again a father with legitimate status or get a further dispensation of time for their romance—an accommodation of conscience that is but charitable". Significantly, however, Plutarch makes clear that such variety in Menander did not extend to the portrayal of homosexual love.

[121] Rape (and it always is rape, rather than seduction in the extant plays) also underlies the plots of Terence's *Eunuchus* and *Adelphoe*, both adapted from Menandrian plays. The existence of lost plays titled *Moichoi* suggests, however, that seduction was not altogether absent from the comic repertoire, as Roman plays like *Amphitryo* and *Miles Gloriosus* confirm. See further A.R.W. Harrison (1968, 32–36), Fantham (1975, 44–74), Harris (1990), Brown (1991, 533–534), Konstan (1993a, 139–160; 1994, 217–235), Rosivach (1998), Lape (2001, 79–119); Cohen (1991, 134n1) comments on the virtual silence of ancient forensic sources on rape, which may be due to the fact that it was often covered up by what these days we would call "a shotgun wedding"; cf. Scafuro (1997, 238 ff.). Surprisingly, though, the Greek courts show no shortage of cases involving seduction, arguably a more serious crime in that it involved the willing consent of a woman, whereas rape was a violent sexual attack in which the girl was represented as the victim. See further Leisner-Jensen (2002, 173–196), who argues that, like the exposure of infants and their restoration to their families, rape in the plays of New Comedy was more a handy means of connecting two people.

[122] In this highly fragmentary play, Moschion's marriage to Kleainetos' daughter without the permission of his father Laches is represented as having been forced on him by

In both cases, however, the emotion felt by the young man is usually depicted as physical infatuation (an exception is Chaireas in *Aspis* 288–298), totally one-sided since the social norms of free society could never countenance a girl acting independently of her legal guardian and forming an emotional attachment to a young man (hence the general invisibility of such girls on the comic stage—with the notable exception of Knemon's daughter in *Dyskolos*).

2. The love of a man for a girl of uncertain or unknown origins, whose legal status (and thus the possibility of a legal marriage) only becomes apparent in the course of the play. Such girls are often already in a relationship with a man, though with the presumption that this is her first sexual encounter (e.g., Glykera in *Perikeiromene*, Krateia in *Misoumenos*), and because of their uncertain origins it is easier for them both to figure personally within the action and to give voice to their feelings towards their lovers, even if the circumstances of the plot often require that for the time being, those feelings are hostile.[123] It is also the case that the man in question is depicted as older than the adolescents of (1a)—for example, Polemon in *Perikeiromene*, Thrasonides in *Misoumenos*, and Stratophanes in *Sikyonios*, all of them soldiers. It is also the case that this "serious" love interest is often balanced by rival adolescent infatuation presented in terms of burlesque, as we see in *Perikeiromene* and *Sikyonios*.

3. The depiction of love within marriage, best exemplified by *Epitrepontes*, introduces plots that in many respects begin where others leave off, especially those involving premarital rape. But whereas in a play like *Samia*, assailant and victim know each other's identity, and the solution to the problem is achieved by the very act of marriage (the culmination of the play), in *Epitrepontes* it is the absence of such salient information that threatens already existing marital relations when the young husband is faced with offspring he believes cannot possibly be his own. The obligatory happy ending to such a scenario precludes, of course, any

his violation of the girl. What we do not know for certain is whether that rape actually occurred or was merely a fabricated story to prevent the girl from being married off to someone else.

[123] So, for instance, Glykera in *Perikeiromene* resents the jealous reaction of Polemon, which has resulted in him cutting off her hair as a sign of disgrace, while Krateia in *Misoumenos* believes that her lover has killed her brother.

solution other than the discovery that rapist and victim have unwittingly become man and wife, but, as already stated, the interest in the plot lies not in the solution but in development of the problem and the route to its solution.[124] A significant feature of such plots, though, is the opportunity they provide for depicting the love theme from both sides—in the case of *Epitrepontes*, Pamphile's defence of her marriage and the reaction this produces in the young husband Charisios.[125]

4. Love for a hetaira, which forms a prominent motif in a number of Roman comedies, has only a restricted role in the major extant plays of Menander,[126] the most notable examples being the music girl Habroton-on in *Epitrepontes*, who brings about the dénouement, Sostratos' jaundiced description of his mistress in *Dis Exapaton*, and, most notably, Chrysis in *Samia*, though in her case the role developed is more that of concubine rather than the typical hetaira type.

5. Illicit love—that is, that of an old man, usually married, for a young girl—was a theme explored in a number of Roman comedies (Plautus' *Asinaria*, *Casina*, *Mercator*), though it was consistently treated in a way calculated to demonstrate its ludicrous qualities. From this it cannot be doubted that the theme also figured in Greek originals, though there is little evidence from the major extant works of it forming a significant element, beyond the mistaken interpretation of the reunion of Demeas and his daughter Krateia by the slave Getas at *Misoumenos* 217–221.

No matter how represented, the basic underlying factor in most representations of love (and of the marriage that often stems from such love) is its romantic—that is, emotional—element. Yet, as is well recognised, this is in stark contrast to the norm within freeborn sections of

[124] One need only compare Apollodorus' development of such a plot as later reworked by Terence in his *Hecyra*. There Pamphilus' discovery of a baby conceived out of wedlock prevents him from continuing to live with his wife; at the same time, his love for her prevents him from disgracing her on the grounds of "unfaithfulness". To avoid both, he seizes upon the fiction of the enmity that has supposedly developed between the girl and her mother-in-law, but is then faced by the studious attempts of all around him to undermine his decisions.

[125] Cf. Pap. Didot I, Sandbach (1990, 328–330), Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 723–724).

[126] For the wider presence of hetairai in the fragments, see Henry (1985, 116–132). Plutarch's description of Menandrian plots at *Mor*. 712c, with its differentiation between hetairai whose true identity is discovered and others, indicates that the "prostitute" type who remains in that position was not uncommon in his works, as Plautus' *Bacchides* and Terence's *Heautontimorumenos* show.

Athenian society, where contact between young men and women was discouraged (hence Daos' complaint at *Dyskolos* 220–226),[127] and the standard form was the arranged marriage (like that organised by Sostratos for his friend Gorgias in *Dyskolos* act V or that arranged for their children by Demeas and Nikeratos at the end of *Samia* act I) rather than one inspired by love. So how are we to view the dichotomy between the social norm and the evidence of the plays? Do the plots developed represent an escape into impossible fantasy, as Walcot (1987) maintains, or do they contain a greater element of reality than the "official stance" of Athenian *mores* would have us believe, as Brown[128] suggests? And what weight do we place on the similar dichotomy that exists in the presentation of established unions: between depictions of arranged marriages in which love blossoms, as in the case of *Epitrepontes* or Terence's *Hecyra*, and those dominated by complaints, usually from the husband (Plautus' *Mostellaria*, *Menaechmi*, Terence's *Hecyra*)? Is the deciding factor simply the more advanced age of the latter group?

b. *Dyskolos*

Though an early play, produced in 317–316 BCE, *Dyskolos* illustrates graphically Menander's skill at producing situations that tantalise the audience through the barriers that stand in the way of the expected resolution. The underlying theme of the plot in itself is nothing exceptional: a young man inspired with love for a girl by a god intent on rewarding her for her piety with an advantageous marriage (cf. Plautus' *Aulularia*).[129] What is novel is the extreme nature of the obstruction to the

[127] The degree to which freeborn Athenian women were able to operate in public is discussed by Just (1989, ch. 6), Cohen (1989, 3–15), Brock (1994, 336–346).

[128] Brown (1993, 189–205).

[129] Having fallen in love with Knemon's daughter while on a hunting trip, the rich young Sostratos uses a variety of characters in his attempt to make contact with her father Knemon, but to no avail. A brief encounter between Sostratos and the girl is seen by Daos, slave of Knemon's stepson Gorgias, who accosts Sostratos in order to warn him off. Sostratos assures Gorgias of his honourable intentions and wins him over, though Gorgias is sceptical that Knemon will ever accept the young lover as a potential son-in-law. Nevertheless, he agrees to provide what help he can, and they leave for the fields intending to make the best impression possible on the old man. Unfortunately, Knemon is prevented from returning to work by the arrival of Sostratos' mother, intent on sacrificing at the shrine next to Knemon's house, and his mood is made worse when members of the party attempt to borrow equipment from him. Forced to remain at home, Knemon discovers that his only servant has dropped his mattock down the well and, attempting to retrieve it, falls in himself. His rescue by Gorgias leads the old man to realise that he must revise his philosophy of life; so, he hands over to his stepson both his farm and

love theme that Menander has engineered for himself in the shape of the girl's father Knemon, represented as he is in terms of such excessive unsociability that any successful outcome would seem impossible.[130] Indeed, such is the gulf that separates the young lover from the old man that Schäfer (1965, 75 ff.) argued that the play in fact underwent disintegration as it progressed—into the mutually exclusive themes of Sostratos' love and Knemon's character—and that even in act IV, where one might have expected some element of contact between the two sides, this remained minimal. Yet, as Brown[131] observes, those very weaknesses of integration seen by Schäfer become subtle instruments of comedy in their own right as time and again comic conventions are introduced only to fail or fall by the wayside,[132] tantalising the audience with the question of exactly how the mandatory happy ending will be brought about. Ironically, though, it is those very failures that ultimately become the path to success; for so extreme a figure is Knemon that nothing Sostratos could do would win over the old man. Instead, responsibility for arranging the match has to be transferred elsewhere, and it is the impression Sostratos makes on Knemon's stepson, the young countryman Gorgias, that brings about success.

Much of the comic effect of *Dyskolos* comes from character interaction and the skill with which the playwright uses minor characters to highlight those more central to the plot.[133] Take the young "hero" Sostratos, for instance. New Comedy convention demanded a rather weak

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responsibility for his daughter, thus allowing her betrothal to Sostratos. Sostratos now proposes a second marriage—Gorgias to his own sister (once he has overcome the qualms of his father Kallippides). All assemble in the shrine for the double celebration—all, that is, except Knemon who has withdrawn into total solitude. However, he too is induced to join the ceremony by the cajoling of those he had earlier treated so roughly when they attempted to borrow equipment.

[130] See, for instance, 336–338, Gorgias: "Then again he says he'll only marry her off when he finds a husband who's like himself". Sostratos: "You mean never".

[131] Brown (1992, 8–20). See further Rosivach (2001, 127–134).

[132] So, for instance, one standard avenue of resolution, the helpful slave, is introduced, first in the shape of Pyrrhias—though instead of achieving anything he is driven off—then with "the bright spark" Getas, who turns out to be simply unavailable. Similarly, the theme of the helpful friend, another stock route to a successful outcome, comes to nothing when Chaireas backs out at the first opportunity. Potential self-help also fails through Sostratos' inability to do anything except, as MacCary (1971, 305) observes, be "literally a spectator at the arrangement of his own future". Even the potential stock theme of rape is introduced as a fleeting possibility at 289–293, only to be rejected.

[133] An early, but still useful, study of the play's characters is provided by van Groningen (1961, 95–112).

figure, someone largely incapable of acting for himself, and this is graphically illustrated by the interaction that takes place. The first instance is with Chaireas, a protatic character[134] whose role is (1) to allow the love theme, already developed in the prologue as a divinely inspired motif, to be shown on a purely human level—further demonstrated when Sostratos actually meets the object of his love at 194 ff.; (2) to demonstrate the inappropriateness of the young man's actions so far; and (3) to reveal both Sostratos' parasitic use of others and his peevish attitude when these fail his expectations. The second character is the slave Pyrrhias, whose encounter with Knemon confirms the picture given in the prologue and, through the failure of that encounter, reinforces the impression of Sostratos already established, an impression that is soon to be further emphasised by his own failure of nerve as the old man himself appears.

The intervention into this situation of Gorgias is itself a multifaceted event.[135] The motivation behind it (to protect the girl from possible harm at the hands of Sostratos) reveals a strong sense of family responsibility despite the neglect he has long suffered from Knemon. Its timing prevents Sostratos from attempting a direct (and potentially catastrophic) approach to Knemon.[136] Its ethical dimension reveals a bridging character: someone endowed with the countryman's stark view of reality but at the same time receptive to the sincerity of a rich, young city dweller. Yet the character of Gorgias has caused some dissent among scholars. Arnott (1989b, 29 ff.), for instance, sees an inconsistency when at 754 ff.

[134] That is, someone brought onstage at the beginning of the play for the purpose of exposition, but who thereafter disappears from the action. At times, such figures might be no more than ciphers who serve as prompts for the revelation of further information and direct audience response (as is the case in some of Terence's plays); others are imbued with characteristics of their own (e.g., Grumio in Plautus' *Mostellaria*). It is into this latter category that Chaireas falls, his comments and claims of expertise specifically designed to create a picture of unreliability, which remains our lasting impression of him. Menander's subtle exploitation of the type is also discernible in *Aspis*, where Smikrines serves as a quasi-protatic prompter of information, though he does figure in the rest of the play, and his reactions to the report brought by the slave Daos, as well as directing the audience's response to the news, are carefully directed towards producing an initial revelation of his own unsavoury character.

[135] The scene is well discussed by W.G. Arnott (1964, 110–123).

[136] The audience is induced to accept the naturalness of what is a blatantly contrived coincidence: Sostratos returns to the scene having failed to secure the help of another slave, his third attempt to enlist outside help. His determination to approach Knemon personally at this point can be viewed either as dawning self-reliance (never realised), or as an indication of continued immaturity in that he cannot accept the reality of Knemon and the inevitable failure of any encounter with him.

Gorgias presents Sostratos to Knemon in terms that are clearly designed to deceive, this despite what W.G. Arnott sees as the spotless depiction of his character earlier in the action. But it is clear that the fiction introduced at this point is in fact the creation of Knemon himself (754, Kn.: "Is he a farmer?"; Go: "Very much so"), and, as Brown (1992, 15–16) observes, Gorgias had earlier acquiesced in the planned deception of Knemon by representing Sostratos as a hard-working farmer (350–370).

During the course of the action, a series of accidents centred upon Knemon's well culminates with the old man himself falling in and his rescue, not by Sostratos (though he does play a small and, by his own admission, comically ineffective role, 671–683), but by Gorgias. A lesser playwright might have been tempted to make Sostratos the prime mover here, but the element of self-interest involved would have detracted from what follows. However, concentration upon Gorgias, who has never received any kindness from his stepfather in the past, produces an act of totally disinterested generosity that refutes all the more effectively one of the two principles upon which (as we learn at 718–721) the old man has based his life: his belief that selfishness lies at the centre of others' actions. This, combined with the realisation that he can no longer sustain in its entirety that other pillar of his philosophy—self-sufficiency—begins the process both of rewarding Gorgias and of fulfilling Sostratos' hopes. But just as the theme of rescue has its ramifications for subsequent events, so too does that of Knemon's reaction to the rescue, ramifications that paradoxically introduce further problems for Menander to overcome. Again, from a lesser playwright, we might have seen a total reversal of Knemon's philosophy, but his insistence now upon even greater isolation—a continuing, if somewhat perverse, manifestation of the desire for self-sufficiency—could not be refuted so easily, since in ancient thought such self-sufficiency had the positive overtones of an ideal lifestyle (Ireland 1995, 159–160). Its presentation in act IV is, in fact, the culmination of a process mitigating Knemon's negative, antisocial image that has been apparent for some time.[137] Yet, while Knemon's insistence upon isolation is philosophically irrefutable, it

[137] At 384–389, for instance, Sostratos illogically converts what he knows of Knemon's antisocial behaviour into the virtue of antipathy towards vice. Later, at 603–606, Getas describes it pityingly as the outcome of a life of hardship, and typical of Attic farmers. Even Knemon had bewailed the isolation that self-sufficiency produced at 597, though its presence there, too early in the action to be developed as anything other than a fleeting pang of regret, is tellingly cut short by the sharpness of his reaction to an offer of help from Getas. See further Konstan (1995, 99 ff.).

remains inimical to comedy's principle of inclusivity, and he is too important a figure simply to disregard altogether in the closing sequence; hence the need for the final episode with Sikon and Getas. That they achieve a grudging reintegration of him into society by cajolery thus obviates the need for a process that would undermine what has gone before.

A further problem for Menander, though one probably more evident to the scholar than to the original audience, was the extent of divine interaction in the play. Pan's role in inspiring Sostratos' love is undeniable, but does it extend beyond the prologue? The appearance of Pan in the dream that Sostratos' mother has had (407–409) and that brings her to the shrine suggests as much, but it finds no mention in the prologue and is not an isolated event, and the mother's arrival apparently frustrates Pan's own scheme by preventing Sostratos from making a good impression on Knemon.[138] Such factors caused Lefèvre (1979, 321), and Jacques (1976)[139] to limit the divine to the prologue alone. Yet others point to a more subtle approach, to the god working through events rather than causing them,[140] and the playwright using passing references to implant the idea of action in the minds of his audience without the need for any substance.

It is often stated that the comedy of Menander is designed to raise a smile but not a laugh, and the plot of *Dyskolos* does to some extent bear this out. Yet there are episodes within the action that the playwright has clearly inserted for the production of broad comedy, in particular the initial entry of Sikon and Getas at 393 ff., their attempts to secure cooking equipment in act III, and the more comically inspired mirror image in act V (loaded as this is with slapstick as well as verbal humour), or the black comedy of 574 ff. in which Knemon threatens to send Simiche down the well after the mattock she has allowed to fall in. Such episodes in fact present ample evidence of Menander's ability to demonstrate that subtle gradation of effect—from light to dark, comic to serious—that characterises much of his work.[141]

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[138] Any such attempt, though, would be doomed from the start by Knemon's very personality, so that in this respect one might well argue that the dream was actually the device by which Pan prevented the failure of Sostratos' marriage hopes at that moment, but ultimately ensured their fulfilment through the accident and Gorgias' intervention.

[139] A fuller bibliography is provided by Zagagi (1994, 192n27).

[140] Ludwig (1970, 79, 84–88). The argument is encapsulated by Holzberg (1974, 105 ff.) and Zagagi (1994, 161–163).

[141] See further Goldberg (1980, 72–91), Zagagi (1994, 94–113), Blume (1998, 75–97).

c. *Samia*

Unlike *Dyskolos*, in which the very personality of Knemon stood in the way of the marriage theme, *Samia* presents a situation in which all those involved actively strive to bring about the play's objective, marriage, but are constantly impeded by good intentions, weaknesses of character, and tensions between perception and reality that stem from a failure of communication between generations.[142] In this, Menander once again shows himself a master of manipulation, controlling the revelation of information upon which so much of the action depends, and in a way that both creates and prolongs a situation of tension from one ostensibly so conventional and unpromising for the production of comedy. The first example of such control comes in the prologue, delivered by the young man Moschion with an air of openness and objectivity the audience would more usually have associated with a divinity. As the play unfolds, however, that

[142] Though responsible for the birth of an illegitimate baby to Plangon, the girl next door, Moschion cannot marry her until the return of their respective fathers, Demeas and Nikeratos, who are away on a business trip. In the meantime, Moschion's embarrassment over the situation has led to Demeas' partner Chrysis passing the child off as her own. When the two old men do return, they have already, and independently, decided on a marriage between their children. Demeas' annoyance at discovering Chrysis with a child is initially calmed by Moschion, but is then converted into fury when he learns by accident that the child was sired not by himself, as he had supposed, but by Moschion. He concludes that in his absence there has been an affair between the two, but is unwilling to pin any blame on his (adopted) son. However, heated interrogation of the slave Parmenon merely compounds Demeas' partial understanding of the situation and leads to him driving Chrysis and the baby from his house in an effort to safeguard Moschion's marriage to Plangon. When Moschion learns what has happened, he attempts once again to defend Chrysis (now in Nikeratos' house), even insisting that she attend the wedding. Demeas is scandalised at the suggestion, suspecting the two are conspiring against him. His mistaken view of the situation leads only to further dialogue at cross purposes with Moschion, made worse by Nikeratos, whose presence onstage prevents total openness between father and son and produces a further rise in dramatic temperature when Nikeratos too begins to share Demeas' suspicions. On Demeas' suggestion Nikeratos moves to drive Chrysis out of his own house, his temporary absence allowing Moschion the opportunity to tell his father the truth at long last. What Nikeratos discovers inside, however, is his daughter nursing the child, a sight that makes him comically frantic with rage. Once again Chrysis is driven out with the baby and given refuge, this time by Demeas, who eventually manages to calm his neighbour down with the assurance that marriage between their respective offspring will put everything right. In a final twist of complication, Moschion's hurt pride at being suspected by his adoptive father of an affair with Chrysis leads to a feigned departure for military service overseas in an attempt to punish Demeas. The attempt is comically unsuccessful, and eventually intervention by Demeas and Nikeratos causes Moschion to accept the happiness that has so long been planned for him. See further Blume (1974) and Stoessl (1973, 21–45).

openness is seen to be an illusion and the information provided all too subjective and self-absorbed, while the mutual consideration of father and son, so carefully established in the prologue, becomes the very root cause of the complications developed.[143]

A major problem faced by the playwright throughout the action is simply maintaining the misapprehensions upon which the situation is founded when it is clearly in the interests of characters to extricate themselves from their difficulties by revealing the truth. We see this in act II when it is (1) Demeas' annoyance at finding his mistress Chrysis ostensibly rearing an illegitimate child that deflects Moschion from adding to that annoyance by revealing the child's "true" origins (himself and the girl next door), and (2) Demeas' delight at discovering his son's eagerness to accept the marriage arranged for him (to the girl next door), which allows Moschion to exploit this as an easy escape route from the embarrassment he feels. It recurs in act III when Parmenon is confronted by Demeas concerning the (partial) information he has recently acquired about the child's true parentage. By forcing the slave immediately onto the defensive through mention of a whipping (306–307) and then off the stage altogether, Demeas both precludes revelation of the truth he seeks and confirms in his own mind what the audience knows is an explosive mixture of reality (Moschion the father) and fiction (Chrysis the mother).[144] Later in the act, the expulsion of Chrysis and the child from Demeas' house presents yet another opportunity for the truth to emerge. Once again, however, Menander engineers continuation of the plot through an effective combination of Chrysis' loyalty to the child and the old man's refusal to clarify the reasons for his anger. By act IV the collision between truth and delusion reaches its pinnacle of development with both father and son arguing at cross purposes, neither able to be totally open with the other because of the presence of Nikeratos.

Underpinning the action seen within the play is the complex web of relationships that Menander establishes for his characters. Though the play is named after Chrysis, the Samian partner of Demeas, it is the closeness of father and son that clearly dominates, but it is a closeness that owes its strength, and paradoxically its weakness, to the adopted status of Moschion. For whereas a blood bond is inescapable, adoption pre-

[143] Brenk (1987, 34–40), Blanchard (2002, 64).

[144] Scafuro (1997, 264) aptly notes that in this play the confusion over the child's mother inverts the usual scenario centred upon the identity of the father.

supposes an element of choice that needs active nurture[145]—hence the emphasis upon mutual concern for each other's interests outlined in the prologue. That mutual concern, however, has also resulted in a strong desire to hide factors that might impair the relationship: Demeas' initial embarrassment over his relationship to Chrysis, Moschion's embarrassment over the baby, Demeas' readiness to take his son's side when he comes to suspect an affair with Chrysis, and his readiness indeed to reject his mistress, despite his real love for her, in order to protect Moschion's reputation.[146] Yet in some respects, the relationship is not an equal one, with Moschion unprepared either to sacrifice his personal interests to the same degree or to admit any responsibility for the situation.[147] Both are graphically illustrated in act V when, despite the apology Demeas made at 537–538, Moschion determines to punish his father for even suspecting an affair with Chrysis. That Menander has chosen to inject such an added twist to the plot at this late stage in the play's structure, when we might have expected the tidying up of detail or retribution meted out to problem characters, is a pointer to the farcical unreality of Moschion's intentions to go abroad on military service.[148] Confirmation of that unreality comes in the admission that love for Plangon specifically precludes the action he proposes rather than prompts it, the measured style with which he plots his revenge—revealing it to be the product of pique rather than true anger—and the patent failure of his attempts to put the plan into action. The intervention of Demeas at this point and the very moderation of his reaction threaten for a time to undermine the father-son relationship further by emphasising Moschion's discomfiture and threatening to necessitate an embarrassing climbdown by him. Rescue, however, demanded by the New Comedy convention that young men are not allowed to suffer the full repercussions of their

[145] Compare the implicit contrast in attitude between Demeas, the natural father, and Micio, the adoptive father, in Terence's *Adelphoe*, or Clitipho's suspicions of his adopted status at the end of Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*, both plays based on Menandrian originals.

[146] That Demeas pays a considerable emotional price in driving Chrysis from the house is suggested both by his words at 349 ff.—"Now, Demeas, be a man. Forget your feelings for her; put an end to your love"—and by the wrench that the very vehemence of his rejection of her suggests.

[147] As Goldberg (1980, 104 ff.) observes, "He refuses to admit to himself that Demeas' momentary injustice to him was a natural consequence of his own irresponsible desire to hide the truth".

[148] For the theme of the young man in love choosing military service abroad in response to his father's obstructions to a love affair, compare Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*.

delinquencies, comes from the heated arrival of Nikeratos, whose threats of arrest allow Moschion to seize the initiative and claim a paper victory,[149] while at the same time providing the semblance, if not exactly the reality, of a father-son reconciliation.[150]

If the foundations of *Samia* are the relations between father and son, much of its comedy comes from the multifaceted contrast between the two old men, Demeas and his neighbour Nikeratos. For though they share a common tendency to anger, their depiction presents two quite different personalities in terms of language,[151] thought processes, behaviour, and dramatic purpose. Yet even if Nikeratos' prime function is a comic one (contrast, for instance, the reactions of the two old men to their "discovery" of an affair between Moschion and Chrysis at 265 ff. and 492 ff., or the depiction of the two expulsion scenes, 369 ff. and 568 ff.), Menander ensures the production of multiple effects from the same material (cf. Goldberg 1980, 22). So, for instance, Nikeratos' arrival at the end of act III serves to lighten the atmosphere of gloom after the expulsion of Chrysis from Demeas' house, but it also contains what Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 121) terms "the realism of the poor" in his reaction to Chrysis keeping the child, a realism though that, like his offer of refuge inside his own house and the prediction that all this trouble will blow over, the audience knows is full of significant dramatic irony.

The potential for the development of pathos in a situation involving rape and the birth of a baby was not lost on ancient playwrights, though it was severely curtailed by the convention of not depicting such girls on stage; thus, in Terence's *Adelphoe*, which is based on a Menandrian original, the young girl's plight is represented through her mother. Here, however, it is Chrysis who fulfils that function, and this in part serves to explain her loyalty to the child, despite the serious repercussions it produces for her. Nor is the brevity of her actual role a surprise, even in the context of the more important father-son axis. Her very presence on the stage not only as victim of Demeas and Moschion,[152] but also

[149] Ireland (1992, 60).

[150] The interplay at this stage in the action has been variously interpreted. Contrast, for instance, W.S. Anderson (1972, 160), Grant (1986, 172–184), and Brown (1990b, 45 ff.).

[151] W.G. Arnott (2000b, 23–31) argues cogently against the linguistic contrast seen by Gomme-Sandbach (1973) on lines 96–105, maintaining that there is no need to alter the attribution of lines given in the manuscript, which assigns the whole section to Demeas.

[152] Victim of Demeas through his expulsion of her; victim of Moschion, who allows her to bear the brunt of his father's anger for a situation that is all his own making. Chrysis'

as champion of the child she carries in her arms, achieves her dramatic purpose. It is this ability to convey a message without dialogue that also mitigates the absence of any overt reconciliation between Demeas and his partner at the end of the play. Her return to Demeas' house at 575 and the reference to her at 730 in the context of the position of authority she enjoyed when the play began underpin the presumption of restored relations, just as the baby's return to its paternal grandfather's house presumes its forthcoming legitimation.[153]

d. *Epitrepontes*

The loss of most of act I[154] and large sections of acts III and IV, does not prevent appreciation of the inherent tensions between perception and reality that, as elsewhere, underlie much of the play's action. They arise both from the emphasis placed upon elements that, in terms of stage activity, seem at times peripheral to the central theme of a disrupted

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forbearance in the face of this, like her loyalty to Demeas' family, reveals a character morally far superior to either of the main figures of the play—one who, though viewed by Demeas as a threat to that family, nevertheless serves ultimately to hold the family together (Henry 1985, 115).

[153] Ireland (1992, 61–62); contrast Keuls (1973, 18), who argues that the baby is left in the care of Chrysis.

[154] A sensible reconstruction of the first act is provided by W.G. Arnott Loeb I 386–388. Its extremely fragmentary remains suggest an initial expository scene between the slave Onesimos and the cook Karion prompted by the latter's curiosity (see Primmer 1986, 123–141) and doubtless revealing the problems in Charisios' marriage that resulted from the birth of an ostensibly illegitimate baby. This would have been followed by a divine prologue, which has to be postulated as the only way of disclosing the true paternity of Pamphile's baby and the fact that, though it was abandoned, the baby has been rescued but as yet remains unrecognised. In what follows Smikrines complains vehemently about his son-in-law's behaviour, interpreting Charisios' move from the family home and his hiring of a music girl as signs of expensive debauchery, unaware that they are in fact the young husband's desperate attempts to shut from his mind the misery he feels at having to reject his wife. Smikrines is then approached by a pair of slaves to act as arbiter in their dispute over some birth tokens. Daos, who had rescued an abandoned baby, was persuaded by Syros to hand it over so that he and his wife could rear it. Syros is now also demanding possession of the birth tokens left with the child but retained by Daos. Smikrines decides that since the tokens belong to the child, they should be handed over to its protector, Syros. As the tokens are being examined by Syros and his wife, however, they attract the attention of Onesimos, Charisios' slave, who recognises his master's ring among them and takes it, intending to show it to is master. At this point the music girl Habrotonon learns the circumstances of the ring's loss (at the night-time Tauropolia festival, where she knows a girl was raped), and she determines to use it in a bid (successful, as it turns out) to discover if Charisios is actually the child's father. In the meantime Smikrines' attempts to persuade his daughter, Pamphile, to abandon her marital home are met with

marriage, and also from a gradation of character involvement—shifting the main characters to the sidelines until the full impact of their presence can be maximised. The first such element of tension we actually see is that between Smikrines' perception of his son-in-law's behaviour and its real cause. This is taken further in act II by the old man's involvement in the great scene of arbitration from which the play takes its title: the fact that against his will and without realising its significance, he becomes embroiled in a dispute that will determine the future of his own grandson. The crucial importance of the scene is emphasised in fact by its structure, the carefully contrasted portrayal of the slaves Daos and Syros, and by the role taken by Smikrines himself (Goldberg 1980, 66). Structurally the arbitration reverses the normal legal pattern, with Daos, the defendant, invited by Smikrines to state his case first. To Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 307), the reason for this lies in the greater dramatic effectiveness achieved by showing Syros subsequently rebutting his opponent's case. At the same time, the reversed order imposed by Smikrines also underlines his initial hostility towards Syros, who had requested arbitration in the first place. That Syros nevertheless wins, despite this, emphasises the justice of his arguments. The contrasting portrayal of character also serves to underline where right lies, with Daos' case constantly undercut by the negative quality of his statements and attitudes. Syros' arguments, in contrast, convince by their openness, emphasising both the altruism of his role as mouthpiece for the child and the importance of the birth tokens for the infant's future.[155]

Much of the dramatic effectiveness of the play derives from the gradation of characters involved in the eventual restoration of the child to its parents. This moves from (1) Syros, able to reunite child and birth

resistance from the girl. She is left onstage alone and weeping when Habrotonon enters, immediately recognises her as the girl raped at the festival, and is able to reunite the baby with its mother and reveal the identity of its father. As the two women leave the stage, Onesimos arrives to describe how Charisios has overheard the spirited defence of her marriage that Pamphile had earlier made to her father and is now beside himself with guilt as he compares the double standards that have marked his behaviour: rejection of a wife raped against her will, yet a rapist himself. The young man continues his self-denunciation when he too appears from indoors, but like his wife is rescued from his misery by Habrotonon's revelation of the situation. Finally, in what remains of Act V, Smikrines is accosted by Onesimos, called to account for his behaviour, and told the truth, though in a way designed to demonstrate his inability to grasp what is by now clear to everyone else. For more detailed analysis of the play, see Blume (1998, 98–127).

[155] For a close study of the scene's rhetorical force, see Cohoon (1914, 141–230). On the "altruism" of Syros, see Iversen (2001, 381–403).

tokens, but, as a slave of Chairestratos, dramatically too insignificant to bring about the dénouement, through (2) Onesimos, who is able to bring one element of the tokens (his master's ring) into a context the audience knows is relevant to the dénouement, but who, as the source of Charisios' knowledge of the baby's existence in the first place, dare not approach him, ultimately to (3) the music girl Habrotonon, whose current involvement with Charisios, empathy with both the child and its unknown mother (evidenced at 473 ff.),[156] and realistic character portrayal (altruism mingled with self-interest)[157] make her the ideal figure to bring about reunification of the disintegrated family.

The developments that are visible up to the watershed point of Habrotonon's involvement in act III continue in what follows, though with greater dramatic impact and pathos (much of it, though, sadly diminished by textual loss) as the emphasis shifts to involve the main figures in the plot. Pamphile, onstage presumably for the first time, defends her marriage against her father's attempts to bring about a divorce. Charisios' eavesdropping on this brings home to him what he is in danger of losing and the hypocrisy of his previous high moral stand.[158] But as young wife and husband are each brought in turn to a crisis point, so Habrotonon is there to rescue them. In the case of Pamphile, the sorrow and despair created by Smikrines demands and indeed secures a speedy rescue by

[156] Habrotonon's innate sympathy for the child's mother is further developed at 499–510 by her insistence on discovering the man responsible, before endangering the rape victim's reputation by identifying her. As she observes, Charisios' ring could have found its way into other hands by any number of routes. The implication of this is that by establishing the identity of the rapist first, his victim will then have a ready route out of her disgrace. Ironically, however, as Onesimos observes in his exit monologue at 566–571, though Habrotonon's plan seems designed to rescue the child's mother from her plight, it threatens still further misery for Pamphile. There is now the danger that if Charisios is the father and discovers that his victim is freeborn, he may well divorce Pamphile in order to gain a ready-made family. As often in New Comedy, however, the intervention of coincidence leads to quite a different outcome, hence the prospect described is never developed further and remains no more than a device to inject further pathos into the theme of Pamphile's predicament before her appearance onstage.

[157] At 538 ff. Onesimos raises the possibility that Habrotonon's plan to pose as the child's mother, in order to induce a confession from Charisios, is motivated by self-interest, the hope that he will then buy her freedom. While Habrotonon does not deny that such an outcome would be welcome, she rejects the later part of Onesimos' argument, that she will continue to pose as the mother in order to extract further benefits (547–548): "Do you think I long for children? Freedom's all I want" (cf. Henry 1985, 60).

[158] Konstan (1995, 144–149) examines the question of whether Charisios' reaction in leaving his wife in the first place and his outpourings here are founded upon the fact that she was raped per se, or the fact they are both parents of an illegitimate child.

the simple means of physical recognition, though even here the tentative nature of the interaction between the two women, a result of their vastly differing statuses (Gomme-Sandbach 1973, 359), is used to heighten the emotion of the scene still further. In Charisios' case salvation from ignorance and misery is more straightforward, since by now he has acknowledged paternity of the child, but it also requires greater justification, since ultimately it is he who is the source of his wife's troubles—hence the two-stage depiction of his self-discovery: first Onesimos' description of wild self-recrimination (878–907), then the contrasting caustic reality (908–932).

With the resolution of the problem at the heart of the drama complete by the end of act IV, the final act is reserved for the traditional purposes of tying up loose ends and punishing the "ogre" of the plot. The former is largely lost amidst the damage to the act's opening, though what does survive may suggest a possible relationship developing between Habrotonon and Charisios' friend Chairestratos.[159] The latter is engineered by Onesimos in a dialogue deliberately designed not only to reveal the truth to Smikrines but also to chide the obtuseness of his earlier interpretation.

e. *Perikeiromene,*[160] *Misoumenos, and Sikyonios*

As in the case of other plays, the complications created within *Perikeiromene* stem from a combination of factors:

[159] However, the wistful mention of freedom at 538–548 might have been brought into reality, or she may have been allowed simply to fade from the picture following a few words of gratitude from Charisios, on the analogy of Chrysis in *Samia* (Blume 1998, 127).

[160] An encounter between Moschion and Glykera is reported to her lover, the soldier Polemon, who in a jealous rage cuts off her hair. What neither he nor Moschion knows (though Glykera does) is that she is the young man's sister: they were in fact foundlings separated at an early age, with Moschion now being passed off as the son of Myrrhine. Though Polemon soon comes to regret his action, Glykera is not prepared to accept such behaviour and takes refuge with Myrrhine. Glykera's failure to reject Moschion's advances leads to the young man thinking she is attracted to him, a belief that his slave Daos is eager to support despite all indications to the contrary. A comic confrontation between Daos and Polemon's slave Sosias is followed in Act III by Polemon's attempt to enlist the help of Pataikos in bringing about a reconciliation with his mistress. For his part, Pataikos points out that Glykera is a free agent and owes Polemon no favours, but he promises what help he can. Glykera, however, is adamant that she will not let the insult Polemon offered her pass and wants only to recover her property from inside his house. These are items from her childhood that Pataikos recognises as belonging to his long-lost daughter. The conversation is also overheard by Moschion, who by now has gained some inkling of his true relationship to the girl, and, with the family reunited, the stage is set for a resumption of relations between the two lovers, though now through marriage. See further Goldberg (1980, 44–58), Zagagi (1994, 149–156), Fortenbaugh (1974).

1. Misapprehension, the basis of the whole play (hence the appropriateness of the "divine" prologue speaker Agnoia), which operates on a number of interacting levels: (a) Polemon's violent, but mistaken, interpretation of the kiss stolen from his mistress Glykera by Moschion, together with the view he expresses in act III that the relationship he had with her was tantamount to marriage; and (b) Moschion's misguided and comically vain belief that Glykera is attracted to him, though both she and the audience know what really connects them.

2. Contrast, which operates through structure, situation, and character. In terms of structure, we see a gradation of effect: from (a) the quasi seriousness of act I, with its probable description of shorn locks,[161] news of Polemon's remorse, and the refuge taken by Glykera in the house next door belonging to Moschion's mother Myrrhine, to (b) the buffoonery of act II, with Moschion's naïve and absurd reaction to the news of Glykera's move, followed by the comic altercation of Daos and Sosias, slaves of Moschion and Polemon, respectively, whose verbal sparring presents at secondhand the rivalry between their masters. Contrast continues in act III, which opens with mock heroics from Sosias, matched at 526 ff. by more from Moschion. Between them, however, comes the more serious element of Pataikos demonstrating the irrationality of Polemon's behaviour, followed by the soldier's plea for Pataikos' assistance.[162] Act IV understandably breaks with the alternation of light and dark and is dominated instead by the pathos of the recognition scene, in which the dialogue of Pataikos and Glykera in some respects mirrors that between Pataikos and the soldier in act III.

Contrasted situation, in turn, we see in the dichotomy between the real love that Polemon has for Glykera (illustrated by his remorse for what he has done) and Moschion's infatuation, which is consistently revealed in a wholly comic atmosphere. In terms of character, there is the obvious contrast between the two males: Polemon vehement, if misguided, in his behaviour to the very end (even in his decision to forsake vehemence at 1018–1020), and Moschion so besotted with himself

[161] As in the case of *Epitrepontes*, textual damage has removed the beginning of the play. The prologue indicates, however, that it was preceded by a scene involving Glykera and Polemon, though its detail remains contentious. Possible scenarios are provided by Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 467–469), W.G. Arnott (Loeb II 375–377), Zagagi (1994, 150).

[162] See further Konstan (1987, 122–139).

that he is prepared to swallow any fiction (as Daos' constantly shifting fabrications in act II reveal).

3. Coincidence, which ranges from the fact that though separated at an early age, brother and sister have come to live next door to each other (a conventional premise in several New Comedy plays) to the fact that the very figure Polemon persuades to attempt a reconciliation turns out to be Glykera's long-lost father.

There is much in *Perikeiromene* that both echoes and distinguishes it from what we see in other plays. So, for instance, in contrast to *Epitrepontes* and despite the "serious" nature of the rift between soldier and mistress, the main characters do not lurk behind the scenes until they become dramatically significant. Rather, it is they who carry the action, while those around them provide its more comic aspects. However, it shares with *Samia* a problem of Menander's own making, but one that he uses to increase the tension of the situation established: maintaining the misunderstanding upon which the plot is based. Faced with an irate lover as Glykera is, we might have expected her to take the easy way out and simply reveal the true nature of her relationship to Moschion. Yet as Agnoia pointedly remarks in the prologue (148–150), this is precluded by her knowledge of the harm it would do the young man, who is currently being passed off as the legitimate son of Myrrhine, and therefore a citizen. In such circumstances, sisterly loyalty prevents her from revealing his foundling status, since this would ruin his present lifestyle and future prospects. But does Glykera actually associate Polemon's action and the kiss? Loss of the opening scene or scenes is a serious impediment to extracting direct evidence from the play, but there are events that suggest that she does not, at least not initially, and that any confrontation between Glykera and Polemon that took place in the lost opening was staged along the lines of Demeas' expulsion of Chrysis in *Samia* and was marked by a conspicuous lack of direct information. So, for instance, if Glykera had understood Polemon's suspicions, would she have chosen to take refuge in Moschion's own house, inviting the very interpretation that Sosias places on the act at 404? Yet when the text of act IV opens, it seems that the possibility of just such a relationship between herself and Moschion now underpins Glykera's appreciation of the situation. Did this figure in the lost opening of the act, or is it another instance of Menander attributing to another stage character (Glykera) facts that the audience had so recently heard from the mouth of Polemon himself at 499 ff. ("The guy who seduced her in my absence")? Another problem that Menan-

der creates for himself lies in the self-esteem that Glykera displays in the remnants of act IV's opening. The strength of character that flows from a handful of lines, many of them fragmentary, seems specifically designed to rule out any form of reconciliation with Polemon. Yet such a reconciliation must occur if the obligatory happy ending is to happen. Does the solution lie in the changed status that recognition produces: the fact that once established as the daughter of Pataikos, she ceases to have any say in the arrangement of her own future, as Konstan argues?[163] Or does her pointed failure to answer Pataikos' question at 746 ff. (whether she has irrevocably broken with the soldier) indicate continued feelings for him, which her sense of dignity suppresses for the moment but which will reemerge with the realisation that his initial insult has led to the recovery of her family (as indeed Agnoia forecasted would happen at 162–167: "All this blazed up … to get him into a rage … in order to make a start on revelations")?[164]

Many of the themes connected with identity in *Perikeiromene* we see again in plays like *Misoumenos* and *Sikyonios*, though the greater fragmentation of evidence in these poses considerable difficulties for interpretation, even to the extent of obscuring the role played by some of the characters involved. Thus, in the case of *Misoumenos*, one of Menander's most popular works in antiquity, the basis of the plot continues to be misapprehension: Krateia's belief that Thrasonides—the man whom she once accepted as her lover, the man who purchased her as a prisoner-of-war, set her free, showered her with gifts, and regarded her virtually as his wife—has now been revealed as the man responsible for the death of her brother. Within the extant text, the obligatory happy ending (marriage) is clear enough—prepared for by the reunion of Krateia with her father (210–215)[165] and signalled with the extant marriage formula (444–446). Removal of the actual cause of the rift, however, is only hinted at in what remains through Getas' use of a plural verb at 431 ("They're giving you [Krateia] in marriage"), which suggests that by this stage the girl's "lost" brother has been discovered alive. All this, though, leaves a multitude of uncertainties, not least the exact role of the character Kleinias and the

[163] Konstan (1995, 114 ff.) also uses Glykera's changed status to that of a freeborn girl with citizen status to explain her silence in the closing sections of the extant text, the fact that her father speaks for her (*pace* W.G. Arnott, Loeb II ad loc.).

[164] Cf. Fortenbaugh (1974, 441).

[165] Line numbers for this play are those of Sandbach's Oxford text, rather than the radical reordering of W.G. Arnott's Loeb edition.

source of the sword we hear about.[166] As in the case of *Perikeiromene*, Menander continues to use contrast in order to inject colour and surprise into the action: Thrasonides' reaction to the predicament he finds himself in, unexpectedly mild from a soldier; the pathos of Demeas' joyful reunion with his daughter, only to learn of the apparent death of his son; and Thrasonides' anxious hopes for marriage that stem from the reunion, unaware as he is of the factor that, for the time being, renders marriage impossible (259–269), and his protestations of love and pleas for marriage met with cold rejection (291–310).

Misapprehension, a girl's fear, uncertain identity, rivalry in love—all of them standard features—are no less evident in *Sikyonios*, though with characteristically Menandrian slants, even if at times details are tantalisingly vague. Here, for instance, we see two episodes of recognition: first that of the soldier Stratophanes, converted at the end of act III from Sikyonian to Athenian, then his ward Philoumene, rediscovered by her father Kichesias in act V.[167] Rivalry in love appears in the confrontation described in act IV between Stratophanes and the young man Moschion—the one her long-term protector, now hoping to restore her to her father so that he can possess her through a legal marriage, the other seeking to block this for his own purposes, but frustrated in his attempts by the discovery that he is in fact Stratophanes' brother.[168] Contrast of character is evident, as in *Perikeiromene*, between the solicitude of Stratophanes and the comic arrogance of the young man Moschion. However, the cause of Philoumene's fears, which caused her to seek refuge at an altar, is less clear. What is certain, though, is that they must fulfil the same potential rupture of relations as is evident in other plays.

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[166] See further Katsouris (1985, 205–229).

[167] The pathos of this latter recognition is intensified by coming after the opening scene of the act in which Stratophanes' parasite Theron, unaware of Kichesias' true identity, attempts to persuade him to pretend to be the girl's father in order to establish bogus citizenship status for her and thus allow her marriage to Stratophanes. A similar ruse occurs in Plautus' *Poenulus* (1099–1173), which may have been based on the *Karchedonios* of Alexis.

[168] Complications of this type also seem to figure in *Phasma*, where the young man Pheidias, on seeing the "illegitimate" daughter of his stepmother, initially believes her to be an apparition, but on learning that she is real, falls in love with her. Problems arise, however, in the shape of another marriage already arranged for him and another young man who may also be interested in the girl.

f. *Aspis*

Serious losses of text in acts IV and V impinge minimally on our overall appreciation of this play,[169] which is at once delightfully simple in its plot and themes and highly effective in its presentation of developments. Alone of the extant works *Aspis* shows the full implications of the deferred prologue, developing a tense atmosphere of despondency in the opening scene before its release in Tyche's monologue, and thus allowing the conversion of initial, ostensible tragedy into a plot of comic deception. Underpinning the gloom created by news of Kleostratos' supposed death is the visual incongruity of the opening processional entrance that can be established from the text, the metrical rhythms used (more typical of tragedy), the contrast of former hopes and present reality (a conventional feature of ritual lament), and the repercussions of the death for the rest of the household, not least for Kleostratos' tutor Daos. Structurally, too, the opening scene is carefully organised, avoiding an unrelieved monologue when it is to be followed by the prologue, but also avoiding any significant input from the second speaker, Kleostratos' uncle Smikrines, other than as prompts to further sections of information or as emotional responses to that information. These responses, like the very mention of Smikrines' name after only two lines of dialogue, serve, though, to characterise the old man in readiness for his later role. Once again, therefore, we see Menander combining technical flair with dramatic elegance, achieving multiple effects from the same material. Here too the germ of misapprehension makes its early entry, with the difficulty of identifying bodies after the surprise enemy attack providing the cue

[169] Kleostratos, on military service to acquire a dowry for his sister, who is betrothed to her cousin Chaireas, is reported by his slave Daos as having been killed in action. As a result of this news, the young man's uncle, Smikrines, plans to marry the girl himself in order to get possession of the booty that has been brought back. Smikrines' brother Chairestratos offers to forego any part of the booty if Smikrines will allow the girl to marry Chaireas as originally planned, but Smikrines refuses. By getting Chairestratos to feign death, which will make his own daughter heiress to an even larger fortune, Daos plans to divert Smikrines' attention to a richer victim. A display of mock histrionics from Daos himself and the intervention of a bogus doctor induce Smikrines to believe the plot, but at this point the text of Act III gives out. In the little that remains of subsequent action, Kleostratos returns, thereby removing the danger to his own sister and the need for any further pretence by Chairestratos. Following this, a double wedding is prepared between (1) Kleostratos and Chairestratos' daughter and (2) Kleostratos' sister and Chaireas. Doubtless, too, Smikrines was shown the error of his ways. See further Lombard (1971, 123–145), Gaiser (1973, 111–136), Goldberg (1980, 29–43), Zagagi (1994, 143–149), Blume (1998, 146–161).

for the mistake upon which the whole situation is based. Careful structure is apparent too in the prologue that follows: the initial assurance, implicit in the very presence of a goddess,[170] that Kleostratos' death is not an issue (from this indeed springs the dramatic irony of the drama), the contrasted characters and aspirations of Smikrines and his brother Chairestratos, and, at the very end, Tyche's name, revealing that force in men's lives that took on an increasingly important role in the uncertain world of Menander's day.

In a plot centred upon the opposition of good and bad, characterisation in *Aspis* follows the uncomplicated path of black and white, faulted by some[171] but not without its advantages for the production of comedy (Blume 1998, 159). Immediately following the prologue, Smikrines' reentry at 149 and his interaction with Daos reveal that contorted calculation and paranoid suspicion of others that lie at the heart of the old man's thought processes. His determination not to check the booty brought back (with its heavy emphasis on negatives, thus mirroring Tyche's negative-laden description at of him at 117–119) indicates where his true interests lie—his sheer greed—while the disrespect he claims to be held in by the rest of his family serves as ostensible justification for his plan to claim his niece, Kleostratos' sister and heiress, in marriage.[172] The strict legality of Smikrines' plan is perhaps not to be questioned, but Daos' distancing of himself from it is a pointer to the disapproval he voices more strongly in act II, which is clearly intended to be shared by the audience. As Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 80) aptly observe, "That

[170] Conventionally, divinities avoided scenes of human mortality; cf. Euripides' *Hippolytos* (1437–1439).

[171] Gomme-Sandbach (1973, 62), W.G. Arnott, Loeb I 5. The insertion of contrasts is well brought out by Borgogno (2002, 243–258).

[172] By Athenian law an heiress could be claimed by her next of kin. In this way a continuation of the family through the male line would be preserved (were the girl to be married to an outsider, her father's line, which had to be transmitted through the male side, would cease to exist). See further A.R.W. Harrison (1968, 132–133). Later in the action, Smikrines seems to twist the law on inheritance at 168–171, claiming in a show of mock regret that Kleostratos should really have lived to become heir to the old man himself. In fact, in the absence of any offspring from Smikrines, the law would have made Kleostratos (as representative of his dead father) and Chairestratos joint heirs. Is this Menander underlining the cynicism of Smikrines' plan to seize his nephew's estate—does it have a legalistic subtext, or was it merely a passing reference, the legal aspect of which the audience was not expected to dwell on? Opposing conclusions are reached by MacDowell (1982a, 42–52) and Brown (1983, 412–420). We should, in any case, perhaps, be wary of treating Menander as a totally reliable source for understanding Athenian law. His aim was effective drama, not a legal textbook (Jacques 1998, lxxii ff.)

one of his race" (i.e., Phrygian and therefore traditionally portrayed as cowardly and effeminate) "should criticize Greek customs, and seem to have right on his side, is a pleasant paradox".

By a gradation of effect, the intervention of Smikrines' brother Chairestratos at the beginning of act II serves to underline further both the moral correctness of Daos' reaction in act I and the paranoia that increasingly typifies Smikrines' behaviour, well demonstrated as this is by his rejection of the solution offered (Smikrines to keep the booty, Kleostratos' sister to marry the husband already arranged for her).[173] The old man's determination to press ahead with his scheme in turn justifies the plot that will be hatched against him, but it also leads to what some have seen as incongruous developments: (1) the paucity of the role given here to Chaireas, stepson of Chairestratos and fiancé of Kleostratos' sister, and (2) the apparent illogicality of Daos' reaction to news of Smikrines' plan (310 ff.: "To get married, you say? Will he be able?") despite his earlier knowledge of it. In the case of Chaireas, his small role, simply bemoaning his fate following the dialogue between his father and uncle, belies the fact that in a theatre where the appearance onstage of unmarried girls was avoided, his very presence provided a powerful physical representation of the disaster both he and his betrothed now were to face. Similarly, for all its shortness, his monologue, with its emphasis upon honourable intentions (290–293), underlines the rightness of their proposed union. In the case of Daos, his reintegration into the situation by means of his questions serves as the preliminary to a role prefiguring one seen more frequently in Roman adaptations—the cunning slave who masterminds the plot.[174]

The underlying theme of *Aspis* is not one of obvious comic potential. The promise of an ultimately happy ending exists in the prologue and is assured simply by the return of Kleostratos, but there is little in the action described above that suggests laughter, and even the plan hatched by Daos offers only delay to Smikrines' designs.[175] Yet comic elements do

[173] Smikrines realises that any male issue of a marriage between the young couple could eventually seek restoration of the booty (if it could be regarded as part of Kleostratos' estate) on the grounds that it was in fact held in trust for such offspring.

[174] Whether Menander ever achieved the *servus callidus* type associated with Plautine comedy is discussed by Krieter-Spiro (1997, 96 ff.).

[175] Chairestratos' feigned death, for instance, could not be sustained forever, and once revealed might have resulted in Smikrines transferring his interest back to Kleostratos' sister. Whether this would be thwarted by any marriage between Kleostratos' sister and Chaireas, however, is an arguable point. Would such a possibility have even impinged upon the audience's consciousness at all? Would Menander have expected his audience to be any more expert on the finer points of law than a modern jury is, or was he inviting

exist within the play in the form of that interweaving of light and dark discussed by Goldberg (1980, 29 ff.). So, for instance, counterbalancing the gloom of act I is the humour of peripheral characters like the cook and waiter with which the act concludes: from the black humour of the cook's comments on festive preparations interrupted by the arrival of a corpse, through his complaints about the lost opportunity for filching equipment, to the waiter's crude jibes against Daos' Phrygian origins.[176] Following the collapse of Chairestratos in act II, resulting from his failure to change Smikrines' mind, comes the formulation of Daos' plot to combine the pretence of Chairestratos' own death and Smikrines' avid fixation with gain in order to divert the old man's attention. Act III in turn sees the realisation of the plot with the dichotomy between Smikrines' wariness and expectation of a plot against him and his patent blindness to recognise this in the face of Daos' lengthy mock-tragic histrionics (the comic inversion of his first entrance) or to see through the introduction of an unmistakable quack doctor, a stock character of numerous (lost) plays. The use of such comic contrasts continues even into the tatters of act IV, with Kleostratos' return delayed by the convention of nonrecognition and rejection at the very point of resolution.

10. *The Transfer to Rome*

It is hardly surprising that Greek comedy, a genre so responsive to the tastes of its audiences and the historical developments in which it was embedded, should undergo further intense adaptation when transferred to the radically different circumstances of Rome. Nor is it surprising that the first recorded staging of such a play in 240 BCE should come in the period that followed Rome's profoundly influential involvement with the Greek colonies of Southern Italy brought about by the first Punic War. What is surprising, if we believe Livy's account (VII 2), is that a nation whose prior entertainments were hardly characterised by sophistication[177] should have turned, for the most part, to the urbane

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them simply to accept a situation that did not breach the law's general principle? See further the contrasting views of MacDowell (1982a) and Brown (1983); cf. also Scafuro (1997, 393 ff.).

[176] See further Jacques (1998, xxx ff.).

[177] The tradition of Early Comedy at Rome is well summarised by Duckworth (1952, ch. 1). See also ch. 3 for information on the early practitioners of Romanised Greek comedy, and Blume (1998, 162–179).

plots of New Comedy to provide the material for transfer. True, the fact that the genre still thrived on the Greek stage made it immediately available, and its plots were centred upon the universal themes of love and trickery, but its underlying ethos was radically different from what prevailed in Rome. Yet, paradoxically, it was perhaps that very difference that allowed the transfer, for these *fabulae palliatae* (as they became known)—plays in Greek dress—remained essentially foreign, allowing their Roman audiences to laugh, not at themselves, but at figures they came consistently to hold in mild derision, hence the sporadic references to "playing the Greek" (*pergraecari*), even if so much of later Roman culture was so heavily indebted to them.

A mark of the impact that Greek comedy made upon Roman audiences is that within forty years of its introduction by Livius Andronicus, whose works Cicero was to describe (*Brutus* 18, 71) as not worth a second reading, Rome had produced its greatest exponent in Plautus, whose twenty-one extant plays (if we include the very fragmentary *Vidularia*), together with the six produced in the 160s by Terence, provide a wealth of material to compare with what we now have of Menander and to confirm the changes that occurred. In this, though, there needs to be a word of caution since, as we have seen, our limited knowledge of other Greek comic playwrights may have a distorting effect on the picture produced,[178] and we cannot be certain that all Roman plays derived from New Comedy. It seems almost certain, for instance, that Plautus' mythical travesty Amphitryo derived from Middle Comedy, and the same claim has been made in the case of *Persa* and *Menaechmi* (see Arnott in the previous chapter n. 5). At the same time, the very term *Roman comedy* carries with it an implication of uniformity in technique which comparison of the works produced by Plautus and Terence shows to be totally wrong.[179] Indeed, while it is likely that in the production of his plays, Plautus was much influenced by the comic milieu of Italy itself and was highly responsive to the preferences of his audiences, at times casting aside consistency of plot and character portrayal in the quest for laughter, Terence evidently was more concerned to produce plays closer to the ethos of his main source, Menander. Indeed, commentators have even suggested

[178] Damen (1985, 117 ff.). See further W.S. Anderson (1993, ch. 2), where he explores the potential differences of effect seen in Plautine plays depending on whether their originals came from Philemon or Diphilus.

[179] The radical difference between the techniques of the two Roman playwrights also serves as a pointer to similar (if less well-perceived) gulfs between Menander and his contemporaries.

that he aimed to develop "the Greek style" beyond what the Greeks themselves had achieved. The dichotomy of comic style between Plautus and Terence extends even into scholarly responses to Roman comedy, with Norwood following the tradition of disparaging Plautus while praising Terence, and more recent verdicts seeing much more positive elements in Plautus' technique.

But what adaptations are visible? Though Roman comedy continued the Greek tradition of presentation at essentially religious festivals, there was no permanent theatre in Rome itself, and this was to remain the situation until one was constructed by Pompey in 55 BCE. As a result the exact theatrical circumstances that may have served to shape Roman comedy must remain uncertain.[180] We can posit that Rome continued the use of masks (Sandbach 1977, 111 ff.), if only because of plays based on twins or confused identity (*Menaechmi*, *Amphitryo*) and the fact that actors continued to be all male. In contrast, abandonment of the three-actor rule is certain because of the existence in Roman comedy of scenes that demand additional speaking parts.[181] At the same time, there is ample evidence that drama itself was viewed with suspicion among the governing classes, simply because of its popularity, with audiences drawn ostensibly from all sections of society, as the prologue to Plautus' *Poenulus* indicates. The most obvious change in terms of structure, however, is the disappearance of the choral element,[182] which had in any case lost any direct relevance to the Greek plays. The popularity of music and song among Roman audiences, though,[183] suggests that Plautus (Terence restricts himself to three short "songs") simply transferred this to the actors themselves, taking his cue (in the case of the polymetric cantica) either from Italian tradition, or from the nondialogue metres we see today in the fragments of Menander,[184] or from the involved arias that had characterised the tragedies of Euripides and later Greek playwrights like Agathon, or even from Roman tragedy.[185] The omission of the choral interludes, though, did necessitate structural alteration to what in the Roman plays became contiguous

[180] See, however, the reconstruction of the Plautine theatre in Beacham (1992).
[181] Sandbach (1975).
[182] For the Fishermen in *Rudens* or the Advocati in *Poenulus*, see above n. 73.
[183] The lyric factor is, in fact, axiomatic to studies of Plautine chronology, which posits a growth in nondialogue metres with time: Sedgwick (1925, 55–58; 1930, 102–106).
[184] Anapaests in *Leukadia*, ithyphallics in *Phasma*, and dactylic hexameters in *Theophoroumene*. W.G. Arnott, Loeb II 57, points to the reference made by the scholiast to Euripides' *Andromache* 103 concerning sung sections in the *Theophoroumene*.
[185] The evidence is summarised by Duckworth (1952, 375 ff.).

scenes.[186] The discovery of sections of Menander's *Dis Exapaton* corresponding to Plautus' *Bacchides* 494–562 and involving what in the Greek original was an act division reveals precisely the changes necessary and at the same time allows us to glimpse the additional verbal humour Plautus introduced.[187] A no less radical shift was engineered by Terence who, despite what is perceived as his greater fidelity to the sophistication of Menander, rejected altogether the expository prologue, forcing his audience to piece together information relevant to the play's antecedents as it progressed. Add to this his complication of those plots by insertion of a second love theme and other scenes derived from altogether different sources, and the complexity achieved begins to take shape.[188] But for Terence it was a complexity that was to have serious implications in his need to restore prologues in order to defend himself from the charges of his detractors.[189]

In other areas the adaptation of Greek technique to the Roman stage under the influence of native Italian farce or the individual playwright can be hypothecated at every level,[190] though the paucity of overlap

[186] Though the division of our Latin texts into acts and scenes goes back to antiquity in the case of Terence, in the case of Plautus act divisions were only inserted shortly after the mid-fifteenth century (Questa 1985, 243–269). Significantly, the difficulty of discerning the act breaks of the Greek originals in their Roman adaptations was already noted in the fourth century by Donatus and is a powerful indicator of the degree of change that took place in the transfer from one language to the other.

[187] The passages are discussed at length most recently by W.S. Anderson (1993, ch. 1), Blume (1998, 169 ff.). The changes involve most notably Plautus' removal of dialogue between Sostratos and his father immediately before and after the choral interval, inversion of the order of entry by the two young men, the use of monologue from one of them to cover the passage of time (something Menander had signalled through the choral interval), and a vast expanse of verbal humour. For Plautus' approach to overcoming the interval problem by means of inserted monologues, the contiguous departure and reentry of a character, or contrived timing, see further R. Hunter (1985, 38–40).

[188] The insertion into his adaptation of Menander's *Adelphoe* of an abduction scene derived from Diphilus is a case in point. That scenes from one play could be inserted into another is a powerful indicator of the conventional nature of New Comedy, though commentators stress that the combination of material is not seamless (R.H. Martin 1976, 242–245; Gratwick 1999, 34–36). A Menandrian origin for the double plot is argued for by Zagagi (1994, 46 ff.). See further Goldberg (1980, 57), Holzberg (1974, 20 ff.).

[189] These are ably summed up by Duckworth (1952, 61–65): (1) spoiling the plays by the addition of material, (2) using plays that had already been adapted for the Roman stage, (3) assistance by others in the composition of the plays, and (4) poor style. However, interpretation of what Terence says or even its veracity remains contentious.

[190] For Plautus, Fraenkel (1922) remains the standard work. More recent disputes within German scholarship on the underlying character of Roman comedy with all its contradictions and absurdities are outlined by Blume (1998, 167 ff.): between Lefèvre and his school, on the one hand, who place emphasis upon the influence of the Italian

between plays often makes proof tantalisingly evasive. Certainly there is nothing in Menander (or Terence) to equal the extremes of Plautine characterisation (his emphasis, for instance, upon character types like the cunning slave, pimp, or prostitute), the blatant insertion of metatheatrical and Roman references, the use of slapstick, verbal abuse and exuberance of language, the curtailment of some romantic Greek elements (not least plots ending in marriage), and even at times the seemingly deliberate sabotaging of the love plot in order to emphasise the element of intrigue.[191] But what was the essence of Roman comedy? Various views have been put forward. To Segal,[192] the foreignness of these plays, especially in their Plautine guise, was the essence of their success. They allowed the portrayal of a society that stood that of Rome on its head, thereby creating a form of psychological release of emotion and stress. To others, the plays represent a social conflict between slaves and those who exploited them.[193] Such ideas, like all attempts to analyse comedy, have an element of truth within them, but when we view the variety that existed within the works of individual playwrights and the gulf that separated Plautus from Terence, we need to admit that the picture is far too complex to admit of a single explanation, and to realise that ultimately the study of comedy in both its Greek and Roman forms is a study of individual units—the plays—rather than of a unitary genre. In the end the play is everything.

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effect, and Zwierlein's assertion, on the other hand, that such features stem from later interpolations by actors and others who presented repeat performances; cf. Holzberg (1974, 102 ff.).

[191] W.G. Arnott (1975b, 31 ff.), W.S. Anderson (1993, ch. 3).

[192] E. Segal (1968).

[193] Such ideas are discussed by W.S. Anderson (1993, ch. 6). Anderson himself sees Plautus' plays as a means of confirming his audiences in their sense of superiority over the Greek characters seen within the dramas, especially when these ostensibly championed the victory of roguish behaviour and the triumph of personal pleasure over family values.

PART THREE

ELEMENTS

CHAPTER TEN

THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT OF ARISTOPHANES

Alan H. Sommerstein

Preliminary Remarks

An interval of twenty-four centuries separates the scripts that Aristophanes wrote for the first performances of his comedies from the texts of those comedies as they appear, for example, in N.G. Wilson (2007b). This chapter attempts to trace the chain of transmission that leads from the former to the latter.[1] The basic process in this chain is that of copying—by hand, for the first nineteen centuries, and thereafter with mechanical, and very recently with electronic, assistance. Copying, however it is performed, is always liable to error. Those who copy texts are normally aware of this, or at least are supervised by persons who are aware of it and are on the lookout for possible errors in the text they are copying. Often an error will be detected and successfully corrected, thanks either to the copyist's or editor's own understanding of language, style, and context, or to comparison with another copy that has escaped the error; but there is always also the possibility that an attempted 'correction', far from restoring the text as it was before the error appeared, may actually take it further away from that state,[2] or that an 'error' may be detected where the text was in fact sound.[3] When all copying is by hand, the net outcome of this process, at most times and in most circumstances, will be a slow increase in the distance between the original and the current state

[1] Readers new to the study of the history and criticism of texts are urged to consult M.L. West (1973) and Reynolds and N.G. Wilson (1991). Kovacs (2005) provides an excellent brief account of the transmission of tragic texts, though that of comic texts is not in all respects parallel.

[2] Textual critics often refer to this phenomenon by the expressive German term *Verschlimmbesserung*, roughly translatable as 'im-worsen-provement'.

[3] Another possible source of corruption—conscious falsification of the text for reasons of religion, ideology, educational or entertainment value, and so on—does not seem to have had a significant impact on the texts of Aristophanes.

of the text. If this tendency has been reversed in the last half millennium, as on the whole it has, this is due partly to the technology of printing (and later developments that have built upon it), which has both vastly increased the dissemination of texts and reduced the number of separate acts of copying required to effect it, thus putting a virtual halt to the long process of random deterioration; partly (though for most texts, including Aristophanes, only to a rather small extent) to the discovery, mostly in Egypt, in and since the nineteenth century, of fragments of copies far older than any previously known; partly to improvements in communications that have made it possible, as it never was in ancient or mediaeval times, for one editor to have access to virtually all the significant evidence existing in the world that bears on the constitution of the text; and partly to the advancement of our knowledge and understanding of the transmission of texts, the ways in which errors can occur, and the forms they can take.

The above remarks apply, with minor variations, to all ancient Greek texts. I now turn to consider the text of Aristophanes in particular.

1. *The Earliest Days*

The script of a dramatic performance is inherently unstable. Any text may be altered after its completion as a result of second thoughts by the author; but in a play text, the director,[4] the performers, and the audience(s) have also to be considered. The script may be changed during the rehearsal period before the first performance, or afterwards with a view to subsequent performances. The impact of such changes on the eventual dissemination of the script as a reading text may take any of three forms.

[4] Ancient dramatists usually directed their own performances; but we know from the ancient headnotes (hypotheses) to his plays, and from some remarks in the plays themselves (*Knights* 512–550, *Clouds* 530–531, *Wasps* 1018–1029) that Aristophanes often entrusted the direction (διδασκαλία) of his comedies to the hands of others. He was, indeed, sometimes mocked for doing so (Ameipsias fr. 27 Kassel-Austin; Aristonymos fr. 3 Kassel-Austin; Sannyrion fr. 5 Kassel-Austin) Of his extant plays, *Acharnians*, *Birds*, *Lysistrata*, and *Frogs* are known to have been produced for him by others, and *Wasps* may have been as well (the evidence of the hypothesis has been questioned, since it seems to be asserting that the same person, Philonides, directed two comedies entered for one and the same competition; see Sommerstein 1980–2002, vol. 4, xv; and 2001, 264); *Knights*, *Wealth*, and probably *Clouds* were produced by Aristophanes himself; about the other three plays we have no information.

(i) The change never finds its way at all into the copy or copies of the script from which later reading texts derive. In this case, we will never know about it for sure, except in the unlikely event that a reliable tradition about the actual performance is eventually committed to writing by a later author and either survives in that author's text or is quoted therefrom by another surviving writer.

(ii) The change is inserted by the author into his working copy. In this case, too, we will usually never know that any change was ever made, but for the converse reason that evidence of the *earlier* state of the text will normally not survive. Sometimes, however, for special reasons, the alteration will leave visible traces. In *Wasps*, one of the choral interludes (1265–1291) contains, in the mediaeval manuscripts, a strophe, epirrhema, and antepirrhema, but no lyric antistrophe. The scholia state that something is missing, but that in itself might be merely an inference based on Aristophanes' normal practice. However, the first-century metrician Heliodoros[5] reports that where the antistrophe should come there were 'seven lines[6] containing dots and marks indicating a corrupt text (στιγμὰς καὶ ἀλόγους), whose sense cannot readily be established'; he assumed, as he had 'often said' in regard to other similar passages,[7] that these lines were already corrupt in 'the earliest copies'—too corrupt to be intelligible to later scholars (say, in Hellenistic Alexandria). Since it is unlikely that any merely accidental process (e.g., a damp patch) would so neatly ruin an entire antistrophe while leaving the adjacent epirrhema and antepirrhema untouched, we must suspect that there has been an intentional deletion, and I have suggested (Sommerstein [1980–2002, vol. 4], 233) that Aristophanes himself cut out the song before production, perhaps because someone satirised in it had suddenly died. Either this happened so late that there was no time to write substitute lyrics, or Aristophanes forgot or did not care[8] to insert the substitute text in his working script after deleting the original; in either case, all that was left of

[5] On whom see Holwerda (1964, 1967).

[6] Another scholion on the same passage reports a gap (διάλειμμα) of anything up to eleven lines. Both these scholia are corrupt; their text, and relationship to each other, are discussed by Holwerda (1967, 261–263).

[7] We do not know which passages he was referring to.

[8] If the substitute text was written at the last minute, he may have been dissatisfied with its quality; comic dramatists sometimes accused each other of overhasty composition (see *Acharnians* 851; Eupolis fr. 205 Kassel-Austin), and Aristophanes is known to have felt vulnerable to this accusation (witness his elaborate 'sick note' in Ar. fr. 346 Kassel-Austin).

the antistrophe was a half-erased passage in which, in the words of Heliodoros, it was possible 'to determine how many lines there were, but not what was in them'. A late insertion, too, may betray itself by its content and/or by not fitting quite perfectly into its context: an example of the former is the passage in *Ecclesiazusae* (1154–1162) that refers to the result of the drawing of lots for the order of performance of the competing plays, while the latter is exemplified by the passages in *Frogs* (71–88, 786–795, 1515–1519) that presuppose, as the rest of the play does not, the death of Sophocles.[9] Other changes in *Frogs* appear to have been made at a later stage, for a repeat performance about a year after the first, and inserted in the working script at the top or bottom of the relevant columns, without obliterating the original text, so that we have been left with a series of doublet passages.[10]

(iii) If the alterations are extensive, it may become necessary to write out the script again from scratch. This is clearly what was done when *Clouds* was revised, some years after its first performance, and both the original and the (incompletely) revised script survived to be catalogued and discussed by ancient scholars[11] (it was the revised script that made it into late antiquity and is preserved today). More surprisingly, it also seems to have happened when some apparently rather minor revisions[12] were made to *Wealth* for a second production on an unknown occasion; here again the original and revised versions both survived to be studied by at least one later scholar, leading him to the absurd conclusion that the earlier version (the one we have now) was actually the play of the same name that Aristophanes had presented twenty years earlier—in spite of ample internal evidence that it belonged to the period of the Corinthian War.[13] In a case like this, the 'rewriting' may have been

[9] See Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 9, 20–21, 162–163).

[10] The passages concerned are 1251–1260, 1431a–b, and 1437–1453; it is also possible that the reference to Adeimantos in line 1512 was freshly inserted for the second performance. For discussion, with references, see Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 9, 21–23, 268–269, 285–288, 297–298), with updates in Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 11, 317–318) (add now Willi 2002c, 17–20).

[11] On the revision of *Clouds*, see Dover (1968b, lxxx–xcviii), Kopff (1990), Tarrant (1991), Storey (1993b), J.J. Henderson (1993), Csapo (1993), Sommerstein (1997b), Casanova (2000), and Revermann (2006a, 326–332).

[12] At least, the revisions we know of were minor (variant versions of lines 115 and 119); it is of course possible that more extensive changes were made in other scenes.

[13] See Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 11, 28–33) following Rogers (1907, vii–xiii), and contesting a suggestion by MacDowell (1995, 324–327). For much valuable additional linguistic evidence, see Willi (2003b).

merely a matter of cutting and pasting (in the literal, not the computer-age, sense) the particular columns of text in which alterations had been made.

These various phenomena, especially the apparent deletion in *Wasps* and the doublets in *Frogs*, strongly suggest that our texts of the plays derive ultimately from what I have called Aristophanes' 'working scripts', which were first written out in fair copy (presumably before rehearsals began) and updated as necessary—and sometimes rewritten—to take account of subsequent changes. We may note, too, that if a text was rewritten, both the earlier and the later versions of it might sometimes go into circulation.[14] But that statement raises another question: how *did* copies of these 'working scripts' get into circulation, for some of them eventually to find their way, a century after the author's death, into the catalogue of the Library of Alexandria?

2. *The Fourth Century*

Aristophanes' literary heirs will certainly have been his sons, Philippos and Araros[15]—both of whom, like so many sons and other relatives of great Athenian dramatists, followed him into the same profession. Philippos, who was given his paternal grandfather's name, was presumably the elder, but their father evidently thought Araros the more

[14] Another way in which more than one version of a text might go into circulation at an early stage is exemplified by the case of Aristophanes' late play *Aiolosikon*. Ancient scholars knew of a 'first' and a 'second' *Aiolosikon* (Choiroboskos, Scholia on Hephaestion p. 235.13–14 Consbruch; *Prolegomena de Comoedia* XXXa Koster = Ar. *test*. 2a.13 Kassel-Austin), and one fragment (fr. 5 Kassel-Austin) is explicitly cited as from the second. Now Platonios (*Diff. Com*. 27–38 Perusino = *Proleg*. I 22–31 Koster) says that *Aiolosikon* had no choral songs; and yet we possess three fragments (frr. 8–10 Kassel-Austin) that are unquestionably lyric (in three different metres, moreover) and some if not all of which, in any other play, would certainly have been thought to come from choral songs. Wilamowitz (1921, 396n2) suggested, I believe correctly, that the 'first' and 'second' *Aiolosikon* were simply two versions of the same script, in one of which the choral songs were written out in full while in the other they were represented by χορου̃, as in the Menander papyri and patchily in our manuscripts of *Clouds* (at 888/889), *Ekklesiazousai*, and *Wealth*: our lyric fragments are derived from the longer version, Platonios' assertion from the shorter.

[15] Most ancient scholars seem to have believed that Aristophanes also had a third son who, like the other two, became a comic dramatist, but they could not agree on who it was: Apollodoros said it was Nikostratos, Dikaiarchos said it was Philetairos (Arethas on Plato *Apology* 19c). We have no way of knowing which, if either, of them was right. On the importance of family archives in the early transmission of dramatic texts, see Revermann (2006a, 84).

talented[16] and entrusted to him the production of the last two plays he wrote.[17] We are told, however, that Araros did not produce any of his own plays at Athens until some time in the 101st Olympiad (i.e., between 375 and 372, inclusive);[18] I suspect that for a considerable part of the intervening period, he may have been making a good living by producing his father's comedies in other parts of the Greek world, especially in the west.[19] Philippos meanwhile remained at home, looking after the family property and from time to time composing comedies himself (he won first prize at the Lenaia at a date not later, and probably a little earlier, than 378).[20] Araros will of course have taken copies of his father's scripts with him on his travels, but it would make sense for Philippos to retain the originals at Athens and make them available for copying, whether as a free service to friends or as a paid one to booksellers. There had been a regular book trade at Athens, with stalls concentrated in a particular section of the agora, at least since the late fifth century,[21] and Old Comedy, despite its focus on issues and personalities topical at the time of production, was evidently succeeding in retaining[22] a reading public even though, at Athens at least, it no longer had a spectating public. By the third quarter of the fourth century, when Aristophanes' plays can hardly have been seen on the Athenian stage for fifty years, and when a completely different kind of comedy was the current fashion, it was possible for Aristotle (*Poetics* 1448a25–28) to assume that his students would have a general familiarity with the nature of Aristophanic comedy and for one

[16] Not everyone agreed, at least in Araros' later years; a character in Alexis' *Parasitos* (Alexis' career began in the 350s) is made to say that he has a very cold well in ⟨the courtyard of⟩ his house 'more frigid than Araros' (Alexis fr. 184 Kassel-Austin)!

[17] Hypothesis III (Chantry) to *Wealth*; with one of these Araros won first prize at the City Dionysia of 387/6 (*IG* ii^2 2318.196).

[18] *Suda* α 3737.

[19] For western Greek interest in Athenian Old Comedy at this period, see Taplin (1993, 12–20, 30–47). If Revermann (2006a, 254–259) is right in his daring suggestion that the present ending of *Lysistrata* (1295–1321) was added for a production at the Spartan colony of Taras, I would bet on Araros as the producer and 385–375 as the date.

[20] In the Lenaian Victors' List, he is next but one before Anaxandrides (*IG* ii^2 2325.140–142) whose first victory was in 376 (*Parian Chronicle*, *FGrH* 239 A 70).

[21] See for example Ar. *Birds* 1288–1289 with Dunbar (1995, 639), and Plato's *Apology* 26d–e.

[22] I say 'retaining' rather than 'acquiring', since it is clear from the distribution of surviving fragments that many comic texts survived from before Aristophanes' time, mainly from the 430s but including some from the 440s. In contrast, of the plays of Magnes, who was active ca. 475–455 and whose record of eleven Dionysian victories remained unmatched, there survive only eight attributed fragments; even if these are genuine, texts of Magnes' plays must have been very rare.

contemporary dramatist, Timokles, to compose comedies that seem to have reproduced some of its main characteristics and captured some of its spirit with a considerable measure of success: both of them can have known Aristophanes only from written texts. No attempt was made at this time to designate an official text—as was done on the initiative of Lykourgos for Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides[23]—since the motive for doing so (to regulate performances) was absent in the case of Old Comedy. However, the absence of performances also removed what in the fourth century was the main danger to the integrity of dramatic texts: the eternal yearning of producers and actors to 'improve' upon them, which led to so many interpolations in the texts of tragedy.[24] The texts were subject only to the ordinary vicissitudes of uncontrolled copying, and these had not had time to do vast damage before the texts came for the first time into the hands of a community of scholars.

At this time the texts of Aristophanes will have been far from reader friendly. Quite apart from the absence of explanatory comment—which will have made many parts of the plays increasingly hard to understand a century or so after their original production—and the absence of spaces or other indications of word division (a feature then common to virtually all written texts, and one therefore with which readers must have learned by experience to cope), a crucial problem would have been the lack of reliable indications of the identity of speakers and the points at which there was change of speaker. Early papyri almost never give the names of speakers; they usually indicate change of speaker by a horizontal stroke (παράγραφος) under the line in which a speech ends and (if the change was in the middle of a line) by means of a dicolon (:) or a small blank space.[25] This system was doubtless devised in the first place for tragedy, in which it was reasonably satisfactory: in tragedy it was rare for a line to be broken between two speakers, and even rarer for a speech to begin in the middle of one line and continue into the next. In comedy (of all periods) speeches might begin and end at almost any point of a line, and a line might be divided into three, four, or even more little speeches or parts of speeches;[26] the number of dramatis personae, too, could be very

[23] [Plutarch], *Lives of the Ten Orators* 841 f.

[24] On these, Page (1934) remains valuable; see too Kovacs (2005, 381–382), also (on Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*) Dawe (1967, 1978) and Taplin (1977, 169–191), and (on Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis*) Kovacs (2003).

[25] See Lowe (1962, esp. 34–37).

[26] For example, the single iambic line *Wealth* 393 consists of six speeches, and in the five lines 392–396, there are sixteen changes of speaker.

large,[27] and four of them might be on stage at once.[28] Before the age of Alexandrian scholarship, perhaps only other comic dramatists would be able to read an Aristophanic text with much fluency.

3. *Hellenistic Scholarship*[29]

The library founded at Alexandria by Ptolemy I soon acquired what became by far the greatest collection of poetic and prose texts that had ever been assembled under one roof. Its directors and their royal patrons seem to have done all they could to make these collections complete, especially as regards poetry, but this could never be more than an ideal aim: thus in the genre of comedy, there were many plays known to have been produced of which no text could be found, including some by major authors[30]—and there were at least some plays of which texts existed elsewhere but not at Alexandria.[31] Of Aristophanes, already regarded as the outstanding and typical representative of Old Comedy, it seems likely that very little was missed; apart from *Peace II* (see note 31), there is only one, doubtful reference to an Aristophanic play from which no quoted fragments survive.[32]

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[27] *Acharnians* and *Birds* both have twenty-two speaking characters (excluding the chorus). The highest figure for any surviving tragedy is eleven (in Euripides' *Phoinissai* and the pseudo-Euripidean *Rhesos*).

[28] See MacDowell (1994).

[29] On scholarship in the Hellenistic age generally, see Pfeiffer (1968) and Reynolds and N.G. Wilson (1991, 5–18); on the Hellenistic study of Aristophanes, see J.J. Henderson (1987b, lix–lxviii) and Dunbar (1995, 31–40).

[30] Such as both the plays known to have competed against *Acharnians* at the Lenaia of 425—Kratinos' *Cheimazomenoi* (on which hypothesis I to *Acharnians* has the note οὐ σώζονται) and Eupolis' *Noumeniai*.

[31] For example, Aristophanes' second *Peace*—which Krates of Mallos, working at the rival library of Pergamon, was able to cite, but which Eratosthenes at Alexandria, a generation or two earlier, had assumed to be totally lost if indeed it had ever existed (hypothesis A2 [Holwerda] to *Peace*); see Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 5, xix–xx), S.D. Olson (1998, xlviii–li).

[32] This is in *IG* ii^2 2321, a small fragment of the great *Didaskaliai* inscription, which gave the full results, so far as known, of all the Dionysian and Lenaian dramatic competitions. On this can be read the name Αριστοφ[and, immediately below it,]αντοπρεσ[, and out of this Reisch (ap. Wilhelm 1906, 85 f.) conjured a hitherto unknown Aristophanic play called Ὀδομαντοπρέσβεις (cf. *Acharnians* 134–171). This is, to say the least, very dubious. The surviving letters are well to the right of their column, as is evident from the fact that only the last four letters of the next line remain and only the final letter of the following one; so it is by no means guaranteed—indeed, to judge by the sequence in

Aristophanes was extensively studied by third-century scholars such as Lykophron,[33] Kallimachos,[34] and Eratosthenes,[35] but they did not concern themselves systematically with the constitution of his text.[36] This had to wait for the early second century and the poet's namesake, Aristophanes of Byzantion ('Ar. Byz.'), who constituted a critical text on the basis of the manuscript evidence available to him,[37] marking problematic passages with marginal signs as was done in critical texts

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which information is presented in other parts of the inscription, it is very unlikely—that the play title in the second line belongs to the poet named in the first (if it is indeed a poet rather than an actor). Nor do we know the date of the production here recorded; so we cannot tell whether the poet (if poet it is) is Aristophanes or the fourth-century dramatist Aristophon.

[33] Σ *Wasps* 91, 103, 239, 704, *Peace* 199, 702, *Thesm.* 567, *Frogs* 1356, *Wealth* 1194. In most of these, he is cited for an explanation of a rare word, but at *Frogs* 1356 he makes the (fairly obvious) observation that the Mount Ida referred to is in Crete, while at *Wealth* 1194 he claims (wrongly) that this was the first comic exodos for which torches were brought on stage (as later became the regular convention: cf. Menander, *Dyskolos* 963–964, *Misoumenos* 459 Sandbach = 989 W.G. Arnott, *Samia* 731, *Sikyonios* 418).

[34] Whenever Kallimachos' scholarly work is referred to in the Aristophanic scholia, he appears to be using the comedies as a source of information, whether on bird species (Σ *Birds* 302, 765, 884, 1181), the dates of dramatic productions (Σ *Clouds* 553, *Birds* 1242), or Athenian festivals (Σ *Thesm.* 80).

[35] His treatise on Old Comedy was clearly very wide-ranging; he is cited over twenty times in the Aristophanic scholia on matters of language (often controverting Lykophron), literary and political history, theatrical practice, and twice on textual issues (see next note).

[36] Two remarks by Eratosthenes on the Aristophanic text survive. On *Wasps* 1032, and on the identical line *Peace* 755, the scholia criticise him for failing to perceive that Κύννα was the name of a hetaira, and on the *Peace* passage, they add that Eratosthenes proposed or adopted (we cannot tell which) the reading ⟨κυνὸς ὡς⟩. Probably the explanation is that he was using a manuscript that read κύνης (as some surviving MSS do in both passages), saw that this was unacceptable, but excusably mistook the nature of the corruption. On *Frogs* 1263 he criticised τῶν ψευδαττικῶν τινας for (he alleged) deliberately corrupting τῶν ψήφων λαβών to τὼ ψήφω λαβών in order to 'prove' that the use of dual for plural, found in certain 'forged plays' (πεπλασμένα δράματα) whose authors did not understand what the dual number meant, was not a solecism but a genuine phenomenon of Attic!

[37] Three of his textual decisions are explicitly mentioned in the surviving scholia. In the neighbourhood of *Clouds* 962, he accepted one or more lines ὡς εὖ πεποιημένα, which implies that they were omitted in some manuscripts known to him; probably this refers just to line 962 itself, which is not essential to the sense of the passage and could have been lost by homoeoteleuton. In *Birds* 1343, where some manuscripts marked a one-line lacuna, he proposed a supplement (πλήρωμα). In *Thesm.* 162 he either proposed or adopted the reading κἀλκαῖος in preference to κἀχαιός, rightly arguing that the context required the name of an archaic, not a near-contemporary, poet. In all three cases, the medieval tradition conforms with his view (as do the two papyri that include the *Clouds* passage).

of the Homeric poems;[38] he was probably also the first to insert accents and breathings systematically[39] and the first to divide the lyrics into cola[40] (previously they had been written continuously like prose), and he certainly wrote introductory notes, which formed the nuclei of the hypotheses prefixed to the text of the plays in mediaeval manuscripts.[41] His text appears to have been, at the very least, extremely influential in the subsequent history of the textual tradition.[42]

None of these scholars seems likely to have composed a continuous commentary (ὑπόμνημα) on Aristophanes—a book of explanatory notes, each keyed to a word or phrase of the poet's text. This was first done, in the generation after Ar. Byz., by Euphronios,[43] Kallistratos, and above all Aristarchos. Euphronios is never cited in the scholia on textual matters; Kallistratos is occasionally, though it is not clear that he ever departed from the readings favoured by his teacher Ar. Byz.[44] Aristarchos, as one might expect in the light of his work on Homer, takes considerable interest in textual questions, discussing readings, accentuation, speaker assignments, and the authenticity of lines.[45] The work of

[38] The only (but sufficient) reference to such signs inserted by Ar. Byz. is at *Frogs* 153 where the scholia state that he placed the signs *antisigma* and *sigma* (to indicate a doublet). The sign *chi*—which is frequently mentioned in the scholia (e.g., on *Clouds* 518, 562, 768, 817–819, 965, and 1176) as a marker of almost any matter of critical or exegetical interest—is never associated with the name of Ar. Byz. (only with that of Aristarchos, and then only once, on *Birds* 76) and presupposes the existence of a commentary (see below) to which the reader may refer for further information.

[39] He is cited on a point of accentuation by Σ *Clouds* 550.

[40] In Dion.Hal. *de comp. verb*. 23, 26 he is the archetypal colometrician. However, colometrised lyrics were not entirely unknown before his time (the third-century Lille papyrus of Stesichoros is an example), and the colometry in the medieval MSS of Aristophanes is stated (in endnotes to *Clouds* and *Peace*) to be based on that of Heliodoros (first century CE).

[41] The headings of many of these hypotheses contain an attribution to him; in the case of the prose hypotheses, this can at most refer to their origin, not their present state, and in the case of the verse ones (which are entirely lacking in poetic quality and informational value alike), it is certainly false.

[42] See note 37 above.

[43] Euphronios' commentary is the earliest attested on any poet; see N.G. Wilson (2007a, 41). Pfeiffer (1968, 160) and Trojahn (2002, 125–126) actually place him before Ar. Byz.; but as J.J. Henderson (1987b, lxii n. 18) pointed out, Euphronios was commentating on a text already equipped with critical signs (see Σ *Wasps* 696).

[44] See Σ *Wasps* 772, *Thesm*. 917 (unfortunately defective; the scholiast seems to be accusing Kallistratos of misrepresenting the views of his teacher), and *Frogs* 270, 567.

[45] Readings: Σ *Frogs* 191, 970 (where Aristarchos seems to have suppressed all mention of the two readings that dominated the later tradition). Accentuation: Σ *Knights* 487.

these and other commentators[46] was consolidated, in the time of Caesar, Antony, and Augustus, by the hyperproductive Didymos—whose variorum commentary,[47] which incorporated many ideas of his own (of widely varying quality),[48] appears to be, through a later compilation by one Symmachos,[49] the ultimate source of the scholia in the mediaeval manuscripts. Didymos' two nicknames, Χαλκέντερος (Brass-guts)[50] and Βιβλιολάθας (Forgets-what-he-wrote),[51] testify respectively to his indefatigability and his carelessness; his work has been characterised, on the basis of the only extensive surviving specimen (a papyrus fragment of a commentary on Demosthenes) as 'potted scholarship, hurried compilation rather than intelligent re-interpretation'.[52] Without it, however, there is little doubt that we would have been deprived of most of the fruits of three centuries of Aristophanic exegesis.

Speaker assignments: Σ *Frogs* 1149. Authenticity: Σ *Frogs* 1437 (regarding 1437–1441 and 1452–1453 as spurious). On Aristarchos' work on Aristophanes, see now Muzzolon (2005).

[46] Including Apollonios (son of Chairis), Asklepiades, Demetrios Ixion, and Timachidas (some of these may not have written full-scale commentaries, and some may have worked only, or almost only, on *Frogs*, doubtless because of its importance for the study of tragedy); another important figure was Ammonios, a pupil of Aristarchos, compiler of a comic prosopography (Κωμῳδούμενοι). See Boudreaux (1919).

[47] See Boudreaux (1919, 91–137).

[48] Of his two known significant textual comments on Aristophanes, that on *Frogs* 775 is a sensible defence of λυγισμῶν against the banalising variant λογισμῶν; on *Thesm.* 162, on the other hand, Didymos makes an utterly hare-brained attempt to argue that κἀλκαῖος must be wrong (or else must refer to a contemporary musician) because the poetry of Alkaios was not widely known in Aristophanes' time!

[49] Symmachos appears to have been active in the late first or early second century CE; see Boudreaux (1919, 144–170). He is mentioned as a source in endnotes in some MSS of *Clouds*, *Peace*, and *Birds*; the first two of these notes also add the name of an apparently later commentator, Phaeinos. To judge by the comments to which Symmachos' name is attached in the scholia, he was remarkably well informed and judicious, and not afraid to admit that he found the text unintelligible. In at least two passages (*Clouds* 819, *Birds* 885), he was using a text that contained a significant error from which the medieval tradition is free.

[50] *Suda* δ 872, ι 399. He is reported to have written more than 3,500 books (i.e., papyrus rolls); if we generously allow him a working life of fifty years, he must therefore have completed one book every five days, inclusive of all rest periods, illnesses, and other interruptions.

[51] Athenaios 4.139c, citing Demetrios of Trozen.

[52] S.R. West (1970, 296); see also Harris (1989). Harding (2006) largely vindicates the originality of Didymos' work, but does not seriously upset earlier judgements of its quality.

4. *Papyri*[53]

The history of reader interest in Old Comedy in antiquity, as it appears from the surviving papyri, can be divided into two phases, with the break coming around 300 CE.[54]

In the earlier phase, it is clear that the big three of Old Comedy—*Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae*[55]—all continued to be fairly widely read. From this period we have sixteen fragments from the eleven surviving plays of Aristophanes,[56] seven others that can be fairly confidently associated with him,[57] six that are attributable to Eupolis, two to Kratinos, and seventeen more whose authorship cannot be determined.[58] After 300 CE the pattern changes completely. From the next three centuries, there survive thirty-two papyri containing the text of, or scholia on, one or more of the eleven extant plays of Aristophanes,[59] and

[53] This is the conventional term for fragments of ink-written manuscripts surviving from antiquity and discovered by excavation in modern times, mostly in Egypt but sometimes elsewhere (e.g., Herculaneum, Derveni); it is not entirely accurate, since many of them, especially the later ones, are written not on papyrus but on parchment.

[54] The data analysed below are based on the records in the Mertens-Pack[3] database (http://promethee.philo.ulg.ac.be/cedopal/index.htm), consulted on 2 August 2006. I have counted all papyri that are attributed by the database itself (not by others whose views it reports) to Old Comedy or to an individual Old Comic author, including those which contain only scholia or a hypothesis; where it is uncertain whether a fragment should be attributed to a named author or should be regarded as anonymous, I have been guided by the editorial decisions of Kassel and Austin (1983–). Where the database reports divergent views on the date of a papyrus, I have adopted the unbracketed alternative; where a dating straddles a century boundary, I have assigned the papyrus to the century containing the greater part of the dating window or, failing this, to the earlier century (thus a papyrus dated 'II ex.-III' is treated as third century, but one dated 'II ex.-III in.' is treated as second century).

[55] Horace *Satires* 1.4.1; cf. Velleius Paterculus 1.16.3, Persius 1.123–124, Quintilian 10.1.66, [Dion. Hal.] *Art of Rhetoric* 8.11.

[56] These cover eight of the eleven plays, none being represented more than three times (*Knights*, *Wealth*).

[57] Though often not attributable to a specific play. This figure is almost certainly understated, since Aristophanes was doubtless the author of a high proportion of those fragments which, for lack of evidence, we are obliged to label 'anonymous'.

[58] No papyrus fragment, of any date, is known to survive from any copy of the text of a work of any Old Comic dramatist outside the big three. The first editor of *P. Oxy*. 2743 (= *com. adesp*. 1105 Kassel-Austin), Edgar Lobel, tentatively attributed it to the *Lemnomeda* of Strattis, because line 7 of the papyrus appears to be identical with a line elsewhere quoted from that play (Strattis fr. 24 Kassel-Austin); but he himself pointed out that 'as the quotation is a proverb, the identification is less than certain', and the coincidence has not discouraged later scholars from attributing the papyrus to Eupolis or Kratinos.

[59] All eleven are represented, *Clouds* appearing most frequently (six papyri), followed by *Wealth* and, surprisingly, *Peace* (five each).

only four from all the rest of Old Comedy—one that may come from a lost play of Aristophanes,[60] one from Eupolis,[61] and two or three anonymous fragments.[62] From this time on, it is clear, Old Comedy in effect meant Aristophanes, and Aristophanes meant the eleven plays that we now possess.

The third and fourth centuries were the period during which the codex—the book as we know it, consisting of leaves (usually then of parchment) laid one on top of the other with their edges bound together—came to replace the papyrus roll as the normal vehicle for long texts; the change has been described as 'the first major bottle-neck through which classical literature had to pass'.[63] Menander negotiated the bottleneck with ease; for Old Comedy it will have been more difficult. Plutarch had already complained two centuries earlier that it was impossible to read Old Comedy without a commentary;[64] now, therefore, it would have been generally felt that Old Comic texts were not worth copying into the new format unless their commentaries were copied too. It may well be that it was at just about this time that the eleven plays that were to survive were equipped with a new commentary, incorporating the work of earlier commentators but in some respects more elementary;[65] probably Aristophanes had already established the place in the school curriculum that he was to retain with ease, Christianity notwithstanding, throughout the Byzantine era.[66] Simultaneously with the change of

[60] *P. Oxy*. 1403 (= Aristophanes fr. 594 Kassel-Austin), a tiny scrap (containing not one intelligible word), which is attributed to Aristophanes solely because it is in the same hand as another papyrus (*P. Oxy*. 1374) containing parts of some 150 lines of *Wasps*.

[61] This is the famous Cairo codex, of about 400 CE, in which is preserved a substantial part of Eupolis' *Demes* (Eupolis fr. 99 Kassel-Austin), together with parts of several plays of Menander.

[62] *PRain* iii 23 (= *PVindob* 29413 = *com. adesp*. fr. 1080 Kassel-Austin) *P. Oxy*. 1402 (scholia), and probably *PColumbia* inv. 430, whose explicit reference to the audience, twice in successive lines, makes an Old Comic origin very likely (see Barrenechea 2006).

[63] Reynolds and Wilson (1991, 35).

[64] *Symposiaka* 712a.

[65] See Dover (1968b, cxv), who implicitly identifies this commentary as that of Phaeinos (see note 49 above) and argues from a combination of various kinds of evidence that 'the majority of the ancient scholia assumed their present form' in the late third or early fourth century.

[66] Evidence for the status of Aristophanes as a school author goes back at least to the first century; see Trojahn (2002, 135–149). The increasing fetishization of 'pure' Attic Greek benefited Aristophanes at the expense of Menander, whose language had some post-classical features of vocabulary and grammar and is severely criticized by Atticistic grammarians of the imperial period.

format, the practice also began of writing annotations (called scholia) in the margins of the codex pages[67]—though it was a long time before it became common to house an entire commentary in these margins, and in the fifth century, separate commentary books were still being written.[68]

The papyri present, in general, a text not very different from that which underlies the mediaeval tradition, and their contribution to the solution of Aristophanic textual problems, though far from negligible, is not very great.[69]

5. *The Early Mediaeval Tradition*

During the eighth century, when learning (in everything except theology) in the Byzantine Empire was at a low ebb, the preservation of classical poetry can have been assured only by the dull, unthinking conservatism of the schools. When interest in pagan antiquity revived among the elite in the ninth century—a revival associated above all with the name of Photios, patriarch of Constantinople (858–867 and 877–886)[70]—texts of Menander were no longer to be found. Those of Aristophanes were soon, like others, transcribed into the new, smaller 'minuscule' script (the direct ancestor of the lowercase Greek scripts and fonts used today) in codices in which the scholia might occupy as much or

[67] On scholia and their origins see Dickey (2007, 11–14 [in general] and 28–31 [on Aristophanes]).

[68] We have part of a fifth-century commentary on *Clouds* in *PRain* iii 20 (*PVindob* G29423), and part of one on *Peace* in *PRain* i 34 (*PVindob* G29780 + 29833C). For a full presentation and discussion of the papyrus commentaries and scholia on Aristophanes, see Trojahn (2002) and Bastianini et al. (2006) with Montana (2005a).

[69] We may consider, as a sample, the thirteen papyri of the extant plays (*P. Oxy.* 4509–4521) that were published together in *P. Oxy.* lxvi (1999). These contain, after allowing for one case of overlap, part at least of 427 lines from seven different plays. They offer (or manifestly imply) good readings, unknown to the earlier medieval tradition, at *Acharnians* 298*, 323*, 325*, 541*; *Wasps* 1085*, 1102; and *Birds* 1672* (* denotes confirmation of a modern, or late medieval, conjecture, or of the reading of a secondary source); in *Birds* 1670, *P. Oxy.* 4516 confirms a reading found only in one of the main medieval manuscripts; at *Wealth* 958/959, *P. Oxy.* 4521 probably had the indication χορορῦ (which appears in various medieval MSS in several other places in the play, but—until Triklinios—not here), and either before or after *Wealth* 968, it had an extra line whose existence had never previously been suspected. These thirteen papyri, then, give us altogether ten significant new pieces of information about the Aristophanic text.

[70] On whom see N.G. Wilson (1983, 89–119).

more space than the text. We cannot be sure, and it does not much matter to our understanding of the history of the text, whether this transcription was done only once or more than once. What does matter is that there are many passages in which more than one reading came down from late antiquity into the mediaeval tradition[71] and that some such ancient readings may now be known to us only from manuscripts of the late thirteenth or fourteenth century.[72] They may have (re)entered the tradition from marginal variants, from scholia, or from late antique manuscripts that were collated but not transcribed (perhaps being discovered in out-of-the-way libraries long after the main transcriptions had been made)—or there may, in some plays (or parts of plays), have been more than one full transcription made.

The mediaeval tradition of Aristophanes, like the ancient one, can be divided into two phases, but in this case the division is clearly marked by two political watersheds: the sack of Constantinople by the army of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and the reestablishment of the Greek Empire there by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261. From the earlier phase, there survive at most five manuscripts and one commentary; from the later, more than 170 manuscripts[73] and much scholarly work. Almost from the start, three of the eleven plays—*Wealth*, *Clouds*, and *Frogs* ('the Byzantine triad')—enjoyed a special status; for a time, this may have been partly shared by *Birds*,[74] but already by the late twelfth century, *Birds* had dropped out of the inner canon. Thus, whereas some 90 percent of the surviving manuscripts contain *Wealth*, and there are also a very large number containing *Clouds* (139)[75] and *Frogs* (about

[71] In one passage, *Wealth* 50, there appear to be as many as four such readings—though one of them (probably, as it happens, the correct one) has survived only as a marginal variant.

[72] Thus at *Clouds* 1373, the true reading, εὐθέως ἀράττω, is found (with a minor corruption) in the fourteenth-century MS Vb3 (and the unmetrical variant εὐθὺς ἀράττω in another, Vs1); it can hardly be an emendation, since the medieval vulgate, εὐθὺς ἐξαράττω, would not have been thought unsatisfactory (it was generally, though not universally, accepted by modern scholars until the publication of *PStrasb* inv. 621).

[73] More than three-quarters of which, however, belong to the fifteenth century or later. The statement of Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 1, 17), that 'the total number of Aristophanic manuscripts … is not far short of three hundred', includes the many MSS that do not contain, and never did contain, the full text of any play, but only extracts, scholia, Hypotheses, or prolegomena.

[74] These four plays, in the order given, are the first four in R.

[75] Three should be added to those listed by White (1906) and by Dover (1968b, c–ci n2): Vaticanus gr. 2336 (Vv19) (Koster 1974, lxxxiii); Holkhamensis 89 (L2) (*ib*. lxxxv); and Athous, Iviron 4269 (Ma6) (Tzannetatos and Soulogiannis 1965/6).

ninety), no other play is preserved in more than thirty (*Knights*), and the text of one play, and substantial parts of another, depend on a single manuscript.[76]

The oldest of the mediaeval manuscripts, and the only one containing all eleven plays, is Ravennas 429 (R), of the mid-tenth century.[77] R's text is copied fairly mechanically and contains many errors, but few attempted corrections; it certainly, overall, contributes more to the establishment of the text than any other single manuscript, but its relative value varies very much from play to play and is never overwhelming (except, of course, where no other independent witness survives). The scholia appear in R in a very abbreviated form.

Probably a little younger than R is a palimpsest in Florence (Laurentianus LX 9),[78] on which can be read about sixty lines of *Birds* (1393–1454); this seems, both in its text and in its scholia, to be an early representative of a branch of the tradition not otherwise attested (outside the triad) before Palaiologan times.[79]

The next oldest manuscript, and (until we get to the late fourteenth century) the next most extensive after R, is Venetus Marcianus 474 (V), now regarded as belonging to the late eleventh century;[80] it contains the Byzantine triad followed by *Knights*, *Birds*, *Peace*, and *Wasps*. The copyist of V, or of an ancestor of V, appears to have been more attentive and skilful in the matter of noting, and accepting or rejecting, marginal variants than was the case with R, and in some parts of the corpus, especially in *Wasps*, V preserves the truth alone with remarkable frequency. The scholia in V are much fuller and more reliable than those in R.

Two other manuscripts are likely to belong to the late twelfth century. Ambrosianus C 222 inf. (K),[81] in Milan, contains the whole of the triad; its quality was recognised, particularly by Dover (1968b, 1993), long before it was shown by Mazzucchi (2003, 2004) to have been written in the 1180s—it is the earliest witness to the commentary of Tzetzes (see

[76] There are eighteen manuscripts of *Birds*, sixteen of *Acharnians*, twelve of *Wasps*, ten of *Peace* (but only R, V, and a copy of V contain lines 948–1011), eight of *Lysistrata* (but nearly a quarter of the play is preserved only in R and a copy of R), seven of *Ekklesiazousai*, and just two (R and a copy of R) of *Thesmophoriazousai*.

[77] See Diller (1974, 522–523).

[78] Called F by Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 6), and Laur. by Dunbar (1995) and N.G. Wilson (2007b).

[79] See Dunbar (1995, 20–21).

[80] See N.G. Wilson (1977, 237).

[81] Called M4 by White (1906).

below), and the only manuscript to preserve the notation χορου̃ at *Wealth* 1096/7.[82] The date of Matritensis 4683 (Md1)[83] has long been disputed, but the hand of the older portion[84] is hard to date later than the twelfth century.[85]

The twelfth-century scholar John Tzetzes (ca. 1110–1180),[86] by adapting earlier scholiastic material and adding much of his own, created a complete commentary on the triad and a sketchier one on *Birds*; his work is preserved in K and in the fourteenth-century manuscript Vaticanus Urbinas 141 (U). He certainly had access to a significant amount of ancient material now lost, and this seems to have included at least one source of good Aristophanic readings of which we would not otherwise have known.[87]

In the Palaiologan period (1261–1453), we meet for the first time a scholar, Demetrios Triklinios (ca. 1280–after 1332),[88] who not only systematically edited the texts of whole plays as no one had done since Alexandrian times, but also, just as systematically, altered them where he thought sense or metre were defective. For this very reason, the key witnesses to the text from this period are those whose text does *not* show signs of his intervention. Outside the Byzantine triad,[89] the most important of these are the following:[90]

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[82] At least before the time of Triklinios, who systematically inserted χορου̃ wherever he thought it was called for. See on this subject Koster (1957, 117–135, esp. 121–124).

[83] The alphanumerical *sigla* used for most Aristophanic manuscripts are based on the ingenious system devised by White (1906) under which, in general, one or two alphabetic characters denote the city in which the manuscript is located (or, in the case of manuscripts in the Vatican, the collection to which it belongs) and are followed by a numerical distinguisher. Thus Md1 means the first Madrid MS in White's listing.

[84] Containing *Wealth* 1–528, all of *Clouds*, and *Frogs* 1–959; the rest of the triad, and part of *Knights*, were added in the fifteenth century.

[85] See N.G. Wilson (2007c, 6–7).

[86] On whom see N.G. Wilson (1983, 190–196) and Massa Positano et al. (1960, xix–cxxviii).

[87] See Dover (1968b, cxxi).

[88] On whom see N.G. Wilson (1983, 249–256).

[89] On the witnesses to the state of the text in early Palaiologan times in the triadic plays, see Dover (1968b cxxi–cxxv); Eberline (1980, 146–160); Dover (1988b); Dover (1993) 82–94.

[90] All these manuscripts are of the fourteenth (or possibly, in some cases, late thirteenth) century.

1. Parisinus Regius gr. 2712 (A), containing the triad together with *Knights*, *Birds*, *Acharnians*, and the beginning of *Ekklesiazousai*;[91] it has practically no scholia.
2. Estensis gr. 127 (E), in Modena, containing the triad plus *Knights*, *Birds*,[92] and *Acharnians*, with very full scholia. This manuscript was in the possession of Marcus Musurus, editor of the Aldine edition (see below); he made extensive use of it for the scholia, but underrated its value for the text.
3. Ambrosianus L39 sup. (M), in Milan, containing the triad, *Knights*, and most of *Birds*.
4. Vaticanus Urbinas 141 (U), containing the triad and *Birds*, with scholia based on the commentary of Tzetzes (see above).
5. Laurentianus XXXI 15 + Vossianus gr. F 52 (Γ), now in two parts, in Florence and Leiden, respectively. This manuscript is unusual in not containing the Byzantine triad; it covers seven of the other eight plays (missing only *Thesmophoriazousai*), but in most of them, it has large gaps (some of which it took over from a defective exemplar,[93] while others are due to damage suffered by Γ itself). Several hands have added corrections and variants (some of great importance) and extra scholia.
6. Laurentianus *conventi soppressi* 140 (Θ), in Florence, containing the triad and *Knights*.

These six manuscripts, together with R and V, provide complete coverage of the pre-Triklinian textual tradition in *Knights*, *Birds*, and *Acharnians*. In *Wasps*, *Peace*, *Lysistrata*, and most of *Ekklesiazousai*, however, we have only R, V (in *Wasps* and *Peace*), and Γ (when available), and editors therefore find it necessary to cite some later manuscripts regularly, particularly the following:

7. Vaticanus Palatinus gr. 128 (Vp3),[94] of the fifteenth century (*Knights*, *Acharnians*, *Wasps*).

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[91] A leaf of A containing *Ekklesiazousai* 283–444, which had been lost from the manuscript not long after the time of Brunck's edition (1783), has been rediscovered and collated by Förstel and Rashed (2003).

[92] E has lost the pages containing *Birds* 222–601, but its copy, Ambrosianus L41 sup. (M9), which was made before E was damaged, can serve as a reliable substitute.

[93] See S.D. Olson (1998, lxii–lxv) on how it came about that Γ preserves only about half of *Peace* (and that in a muddled order).

[94] Called J by MacDowell (1971).

8. Vaticanus Palatinus gr. 67 (Vp2),[95] of the fifteenth century (the same three plays, plus the triad, *Birds*, *Peace*, and most of *Lysistrata*). In most of the plays it contains, Vp2 has a post-Triklinian text, but in *Peace*, it is pre-Triklinian, and *Lysistrata* seems never to have been edited by Triklinios at all.
9. Hauniensis 1980 (H), in Copenhagen, of the fifteenth century—a twin of Vp2.
10. Parisinus Regius 2717 (C), of the sixteenth century; this very carelessly written manuscript contains the same plays as Vp2 and H, and it is very close to them in *Birds*, *Peace*, and *Lysistrata*, but in *Acharnians* and *Wasps*, it is a twin of Vp3.[96]
11. Perusinus H56 (Λ),[97] in Perugia, of the fifteenth century; it contains only *Frogs* and *Ekklesiazousai*. In the latter play, it is an independent representative of the same family as A and Γ, and (together with its copy, Mu1)[98] it is the only manuscript other than R to preserve the ending of the play (from line 1136).

There can be no overall stemma codicum for the text of Aristophanes. In the Byzantine triad, the abundance of available copies, and therefore of opportunities for collation and correction, was always so great that their tradition has to be treated as an 'open recension';[99] outside the triad, the affinities of manuscripts frequently change from one play to another, and sometimes within a play,[100] so that the tradition of each play has to be analysed separately.[101]

Two great scholars living close to the end of the thirteenth century, Maximos Planudes and Manuel Moschopoulos, are known to have

[95] Called P by Platnauer (1964), Dunbar (1995), and S.D. Olson (1998, 2002), and by N.G. Wilson (2007b) in *Peace* and *Birds*.

[96] C has often been regarded as a copy of Vp2 in some plays and of Vp3 in others, and thus of no independent value; but see S.D. Olson (1998) lvi–lvii, lxx, (2002) lxxxvii–lxxxviii.

[97] So labelled by Ussher (1973), Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 10), and N.G. Wilson (2007b); Vetta (1989) retained White's siglum Pe1.

[98] That Mu1 (Monacensis 137) is a copy of Λ has been shown by Vetta (1989, lxviii–lxix).

[99] See M.L. West (1973, 14–15, 37–47) and (on correction in the Byzantine triad of Aristophanes) Dover (1988, 234–240).

[100] For example, V and E are closely related in *Knights* and in the first 385 lines of *Birds* (taking M9 to represent E in 222–385, see note 92 above), but not elsewhere.

[101] This has been done in exemplary fashion for *Ekklesiazousai* by Vetta (1989, lxv–lxix), for *Birds* by Dunbar (1995), and for *Peace* and *Acharnians* by S.D. Olson (1998, 2002).

commented on the triadic plays, but neither of them seems to have written a full commentary[102] and neither can be conclusively proved to have made any emendations in the text.[103] An important figure of the next generation, Thomas Magistros (ca. 1275–1350), did produce a full commentary, much of which was taken over by his pupil Triklinios. He is sometimes said, or assumed, to have prepared a recension of the text,[104] but the evidence does not provide clear justification for such a claim.[105]

Triklinios' own editorial work can be followed in some detail, at least for the triad, thanks to the survival of Parisinus suppl. gr. 463 (P20),[106] which contains his corrections and scholia; copies of it were made at various times, and these (or their surviving descendants) accordingly reflect the different stages of his editorial activity. Eventually, Triklinios must have given up using P20 as his working copy and prepared another, which he extended to cover a total of eight plays (the triad plus *Knights*, *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Birds*, and *Peace*); from this is descended Holkhamensis 88 (L), now in Oxford, written in the early fifteenth century, which gives us what (so far as we can tell) is Triklinios' final recension of the Aristophanic text.[107]

Triklinios' understanding of classical metre far exceeded that of any mediaeval predecessor. Thanks to his study of the metrical scholia and of Hephaestion's handbook on metre, he had a good grasp of the simpler verse patterns, and while there was much about lyrics that he never came to understand,[108] he did know about strophic responsion. This knowledge he put to work in emending his texts. Often his intervention proves to be for the worse: his feeling for style and his understanding of the principles of word order and the use of particles were far inferior to his metrical knowledge, and sometimes—for example through taking a long vowel to be short or vice versa—he may 'correct' a text that is in fact perfectly sound. But there is much that he was able to put right, and

[102] The few comments ascribed to them in later scholia may derive either from their oral teaching or from marginalia in their copies of the plays; see Eberline (1980, 146).

[103] See N.G. Wilson (1983, 238, 244–247).

[104] See, for example, Dover (1968b, cxvii–cxix) (on *Clouds*); Eberline (1980, 86–88) is uncertain, and in any case concludes that 'Thomas seems to have cared little for textual criticism in the modern sense'.

[105] See N.G. Wilson (1983, 248), who regards 'the use of such a term [as *recension* as being] the result of loose thinking'.

[106] See Koster (1957), Eberline (1980, 49–77, 88–114), and Dover (1993, 81–83).

[107] See N.G. Wilson (1962).

[108] Though he understands them considerably better in his later work than in his earlier (Eberline 1980, 76–77).

in *Wasps* alone he has restored the true reading, in my judgement, in some twenty places. His recension exercised an enormous influence on the subsequent manuscript tradition[109] and, working through the Aldine edition (see below), on the first three centuries of the printed tradition also.

In the fifteenth century we find a scattering of other successful emendations (and, as always, a larger number of unsuccessful ones) here and there in manuscripts of the triadic plays, many of them by now written by refugee scholars (or their local pupils) in Italy. One other manuscript of this period deserves special mention. Parisinus Regius 2715 (B) is based partly on a Triklinian manuscript close to (but not identical with) L, partly on Γ (or more likely a copy of Γ),[110] from which it acquired most of *Lysistrata* and *Ekklesiazousai*;[111] like Γ, it omits the triadic plays. Its distinctive feature, however, is the presence of many new emendations, a considerable number of which (at least a dozen in *Wasps*, for example) have rightly won general acceptance;[112] the quality of some of these is fully worthy of the great philologists of the sixteenth century—but their author lived long before that. As N.G. Wilson has discovered (Wilson 2007c, 12–13), the scribe of B was the wandering scholar Andronikos Kallistos (born ca. 1400, probably in Constantinople; died after 1476, in London).[113] With him, we end our survey of the manuscript tradition.

An important element in the textual tradition that should not be forgotten is furnished by the many citations from the comedies, sometimes of considerable length, in the works of other ancient and mediaeval authors and in lexica, collections of proverbs, and the like; sometimes one or more of these so-called *testimonia* preserve a true reading that has been corrupted in all Aristophanic manuscripts.[114] By far the most

[109] For his edition of *Clouds* (1968b), Dover used information about the readings of sixty-seven manuscripts. Eleven of these are certainly or probably too early to have been able to make use of Triklinios' work; of the remaining fifty-six, no fewer than thirty-three 'show (in varying degrees) Tri[k]linian "trade-marks" in lyrics and eupolideans' (Dover 1968, cxvi–cxvii), not counting those into which Triklinian readings have been imported as corrections or variants.

[110] See Sommerstein (1980–2002, vol. 10, 38).

[111] When B's exemplar was copied from Γ, Γ still contained *Lysistrata* 1035–1097 and 1237–end, which it afterwards lost.

[112] Some of these also figure in the Aldine edition, and it is possible that these are Triklinian emendations that for some reason did not get into L.

[113] On Kallistos' life and work, see Cammelli (1942) and N.G. Wilson (1992, 116–118). For another exemplification of his critical ability, see the discussions of his work on Lysias by Donadi (1976, 240–250), Sosower (1987, 62), and Carey (2007, xviii).

[114] This occurs about eleven times in *Wasps* alone; on nine of these occasions, the *Suda*

extensive source of *testimonia* is the tenth-century lexicon/encyclopaedia known as the *Suda*, which cites, for example, nearly two hundred lines of *Wasps*; it exhibits a text that is often close to that of its near contemporary R.

6. *The First Printed Editions*

The first printed edition of Aristophanes, as of so many ancient authors, was published by Aldus Manutius[115] at Venice in 1498. It was edited by the Cretan Marcus Musurus and contained nine plays; originally he had expected to include only seven, but *Peace* and *Ekklesiazousai* were added before publication. His main copy text, as has long been recognised, must have been a Triklinian manuscript, and a fragment of it (containing only *Wealth*) has now been identified as Selestadiensis 347 (at Sélestat [Bas-Rhin]); its text, and that of the Aldine so far as it is dependent thereon, is closely akin to that of L, though not, as the manuscript's discoverer thought, actually derived from L.[116] Musurus also had E in his possession[117] and from it derived corrections and most of his scholia on those plays it contained; and his last-minute addition of *Peace* and *Ekklesiazousai* shows that he later acquired a third manuscript, which must have contained the end of *Peace* intact (like R, Vp2, H, and C) and the whole of *Ekklesiazousai* (like R and Λ)—the manuscript certainly was not R, so it is likely to have been a manuscript related to Vp2, H, and C[118] that had picked up a complete text of *Ekklesiazousai* from a twin of Λ.[119] *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazousai* were first printed at Florence

(sometimes alone, sometimes in agreement with other sources) has the true reading. The Aristophanic *testimonia* were collected by Kraus (1931), since supplemented by Kassel (1977, 1978).

[115] On whom see Lowry (1979) and Sicherl (1997).

[116] This manuscript was identified as Musurus' copy text by Sicherl (1979; revised in Sicherl 1997, 114–154); but see now also S.D. Olson (1998, lx–lxii). It was probably copied (by Zacharias Kallierges) at Musurus' request in 1497, expressly for use in preparing the edition (Sicherl 1997, 131).

[117] E has on its first page the inscription 'De miser Marco Musuro'.

[118] See S.D. Olson (1998, lxi–lxii) (contra Sicherl 1997, 138–145). This manuscript probably also contained (as Vp2, H, and C do) the greater part of *Lysistrata*; Aldus could have printed this had he wished to, but declined to do so because the gaps were too great, amounting (he says) to nearly half the play (in fact, as we now know, to just over a quarter of it).

[119] See Sicherl (1997, 146). In the first 1135 lines of the play (where Γ, and at first also A, are available for comparison), the Aldine dozens of times agrees with Λ alone in manifest

in 1516 as a supplementary volume to the 'Juntine' edition, the editor being Euphrosynus Boninus. Boninus' copy text was none other than R; the subsequent history of the text of Aristophanes would have been very different if he had discovered R in time to be able to use it for the other nine plays, or if he had thought of re-editing them with the aid of this '*antiquissimum Aristophanis exemplar*' (as his publisher calls it), or if he had deposited it in a library heavily frequented by scholars.

7. *The Last Half Millennium*

The comedies were several times republished in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; at this time proposals for improving the text often originated in the marginal notes of scholarly readers, and it could be a matter of luck whether they were taken up by an editor or passed into oblivion.[120] The edition of L. Küster (Amsterdam, 1710) marked a considerable step forward, largely thanks to the suggestions communicated to him by Richard Bentley; so did those of R.P.F. Brunck (Strasbourg, 1783), the first editor to make systematic use of manuscript evidence (though he put too much trust in the often specious plausibility of B), and of Ph. Invernizi (Leipzig, 1794), the first since Boninus to make use of R. In the nineteenth century the broad shape of the manuscript tradition gradually came to be understood and the special position of R and V appreciated; particularly significant were the editions of *Knights*, *Thesmophoriazousai*, *Frogs*, *Ekklesiazousai*, and *Wealth* by A. von Velsen (Leipzig, 1869–1883), the first to be based on accurate collations of the principal manuscripts. At the same time, the text benefited at least as much from the clear identification of many corrupt passages and their judicious emendation (accompanied, as ever, by much that was far from judicious). The studies of the last hundred years have perhaps done even more to deepen and refine our knowledge of the evidence for the text, though improvement in the state of the text itself has inevitably been

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error. Its text is unlikely, however, to have been derived directly or indirectly from that of Λ itself, since at 1150 the Aldine has ἔχουσά τοι where Λ leaves a blank and writes only the accents and breathings (which are compatible either with ἔχουσά τοι or with R's ἔχω δέ τοι). See now Regtuit (2007, 72–73).

[120] As was the fate of many conjectures on *Thesmophoriazousai* from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even early eighteenth centuries, until they were rediscovered in recent years by Schreiber (1975) and Austin (1987). Finglass (2009, 201–202) publishes some fifty previously unknown conjectures by L.C. Valckenaer (1715–1785) on all Aristophanes' plays.

slower; landmarks have been the great Groningen edition of the scholia (begun by W.J.W. Koster in 1960, and completed in 2007) and the Clarendon (Oxford) series of editions of individual plays, especially those by Sir Kenneth Dover (*Clouds*, 1968; *Frogs*, 1993), by Nan Dunbar (*Birds*, 1995), and by Douglas Olson alone (*Peace*, 1998; *Acharnians*, 2002) and in partnership with Colin Austin (*Thesmophoriazousai*, 2004).

I can fittingly end this chapter by expressing my gratitude to Nigel Wilson for making available to me in advance of publication the introduction to his book *Aristophanea* (Wilson 2007c), which has been of the greatest assistance in enhancing the accuracy and up-to-dateness of this chapter—and also, as all Aristophanic scholars now must, for providing us at long last with a compact, reliable, and properly evidenced critical edition (Wilson 2007b) of the eleven comedies.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

COMIC FRAGMENTS: TRANSMISSION AND TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Heinz-Günther Nesselrath

Preliminary Remarks

For a very long time after the end of antiquity, Greek comedy was mainly represented by just one author—namely, Aristophanes. In the course of the twentieth century, papyri have restored to us, at least up to a substantial degree, another—namely, Menander. Still, two authors, even though they may be the most excellent of their kind, cannot possibly provide an adequate picture of a genre in whose development hundreds of authors had participated over hundreds of years, producing and staging thousands of plays. To make up for the inevitable distortions in our view of Greek comedy that looking only at Aristophanes and Menander would cause, we have to take into account the widely spread debris of all those comic plays that have not survived (or been restored by papyrus), that is, tens of thousands of fragments of very variable length (ranging from just one word to sometimes—but very rarely—fifty or more lines) and content (ranging from unusual forms of single words to sometimes quite precious glimpses into a plot of a play). On the following pages, I shall first have a look at the sources of our Greek comic fragments[1] and then will try to formulate some observations and tentative rules of how we

[1] This task has been made fairly easy by *Poetae Comici Graeci*, the new comprehensive edition of all the remains of ancient Greek comedy by Rudolf Kassel and Colin Austin (1983–), of which by now only two volumes are still missing, that is, vol. VI 1 (covering the papyrus fragments of Menander) and vol. III 1 (the plays of Aristophanes preserved in the manuscript tradition). Since the appearance of the first volume (IV) in 1983, *PCG* has been deservedly praised by every reviewer, for never have the comic fragments been presented more fully and more clearly; among other things, the presentation of those fragments that have been preserved by the very complex lexicographical traditions must be regarded as a most impressive advance compared with all earlier editions.

should deal with them when we try to tease comic fragments out of their contexts.

At first look, there does not seem to be much difference between the various sources of comic fragments, and in fact pretty much the same authors and works provide fragments from comic plays of all stages of the development of the genre. On closer inspection, however, those sources quite noticeably vary in frequency from one phase of comedy to another, thus reflecting how later epochs took quite different interests in those phases. To demonstrate this, I will look at a few representative authors from Old, Middle,[2] and New Comedy each and see how they fared in later times respectively.

1. *Transmission*

a. *Old Comic Fragments*

First, the oldest of the Big Three of Old Attic Comedy, Cratinus. He is present in *PCG* IV with 514 fragments (of which 10 are dubious). Of these fragments, the largest group[3] is provided by the lexicographical tradition, which—while beginning ultimately in Hellenistic times (see below)—produced its most important extant representatives (apart from Hesychius of Alexandria, about whom more follows) between the ninth and the eleventh century:[4] 144 Cratinea have been preserved in the lexicon[5]

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[2] This approach may actually provide a further argument for the tripartite division of Attic comedy as being something real and not an invention of scholars in later antiquity, as has been thought by a number of classicists. I hope to have provided other arguments to refute this view in Nesselrath (1990a).

[3] Please note that the numbers given in the following survey do not exactly add up to the total of 514, but exceed it, because numerous fragments are found in more than one source.

[4] On it, see now the very clear and accessible survey given by Alpers (2001, 194–210). A more extensive and somewhat older, but still very useful, treatment of Greek lexicography is provided by Cohn (1913). See now also the Prolegomena of Theodoridis (1982/1998). This new edition of the *Photius Lexicon* comprises vol. I: A–Δ (1982) XXV–LXXIX, and vol. 2: E–M (1998) XXVII–CXVI.

[5] For a very long time, Photius' lexicon could be read only with very substantial gaps: the codex Galeanus edited by R. Porson (1822) missed large parts of letter α, the whole of letters β–δ, and substantial parts of letters ε, ϰ, φ, and ψ, as well as the end. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the missing parts of α could be largely restored by a newly edited codex Berolinensis (Reitzenstein 1907). It was only in 1959 that the codex Zavordensis was discovered, the one manuscript containing the complete *Photius Lexicon*, though unfortunately rather often in an abbreviated form (compared to its fuller ancestor, the Galeanus); for some parts the Zavordensis writer himself provided

that the young Photius compiled around the year 840.[6] The next largest batch of Cratinus fragments (namely, 67 items) is presented by the famous *Suda*, the largest, most famous, and possibly most important Byzantine lexicon on everything related to the ancient world. The *Suda* came into existence around 1000 CE and drew on a number of older sources, among them an expanded version of the Συναγωγὴ λέξεων χρησίμων,[7] which had already been used by Photius.[8] The third-largest number of Cratinea (44) can be found in the lexicon of Hesychius of Alexandria (around 500 CE), whose main source included the Περιεργοπένητες of Diogenianus (see note 6); 34 fragments are present in the so-called *Lexicon Bachmannianum* (see note 7), representing another somewhat expanded version (not identical to that used by Photius and *Suda*) of the Συναγωγὴ λέξεων χρησίμων. Still other lexica exhibit lower numbers of fragments of our poet;[9] all in all, the lexicographers account for about 370 items.

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a supplement where he added some of the material he had formerly left out (this is the *Supplementum Zavordense*, in the same codex). For all this, see Theodoridis (1982, XXVII–XXXIV and LXIf.).

[6] Alpers (2001, 202) calls this lexicon "eine mechanische Kompilation weniger wertvoller … lexikographischer Quellen," namely, of two (slightly expanded) versions of the so-called Collection of useful words (Συναγωγὴ λέξεων χρησίμων) and of the so-called book for poor students (Περιεργοπένητες) by the Hadrianic author Diogenianus, itself an epitome (in five books) of the work of Julius Vestinus, which again is the epitome of a really huge lexicon (comprising ninety-five books) with the title "On Glosses and Words" (Περὶ γλωσσῶν ἤτοι λέξεων), written by two grammarians of the latter part of the first century CE, Zopyrion (letters α–δ) and Pamphilus (letters ε–ω); see Alpers (2001, 200).

[7] Mentioned in note 6, above, the Συναγωγή itself is found in two manuscripts, codex Coislinianus 347 (ninth cent.) and Coislinianus 345 (tenth cent.), of which a more original version is preserved in Coisl. 347; of this, only the letter α has been edited so far (by Boysen [1891/1892], reprinted in Latte-Erbse [1965, 12–38]). See Cohn (1913, 699) and Alpers (2001, 202). Its somewhat expanded version in Coisl. 345 was edited by Bachmann (1828, 1–422) and is therefore called "*Lexicon Bachmannianum*" (see below).

[8] See the preceding note. Since Wentzel (1895, 477–482) (= Latte-Erbse 1965, 1–6), the *communis opinio* has been that the *Suda* did not make use of Photius' lexicon itself (see Cohn 1913, 699, 701, and still Alpers 2001, 202); recently, however, Theodoridis (1998, XXVII–XL) has presented a convincing case that the *Suda* in fact did use Photius.

[9] Especially worthy of note are the Λέξεις τῶν δέκα ῥητόρων (Words of the ten orators) compiled by Valerius Harpocration at the end of the second century CE (still preferably to be used in the old edition by Wilhelm Dindorf [1853], as the recent edition by J.J. Keaney [1991] is not always reliable), which rather often cites from lost comedies to explain notions found in the Attic orators; and the same can be said of the lexicon of the so-called Anti-Atticist, which dates from the second century CE as well and which frequently defends words and phrases as Attic against more purist grammarians (like Phrynichus) by citing comic writers of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.

Another rather rich source of Cratinean material includes various collections of scholia, that is, explanatory notes (often amounting to a veritable commentary) found in the margins of manuscripts of other ancient authors. It comes as no surprise that in this respect the Aristophanes Scholia yield the must numerous results, namely, 50 fragments. In order to explain the plays of Aristophanes, Alexandrian scholars naturally looked into the plays of one of his biggest rivals. In lesser numbers, other scholia provide quotes of Cratinus too (apparently the comic poets proved a good source of comparative material for philological work on noncomic authors as well): the Plato corpus delivers 13 Cratinus fragments (mostly in cases where scholars looked into the contemporary Attic background of the Platonic dialogues), the Homer Scholia only 6,[10] and the scholia on Lucian the same number.[11]

So far, we had to deal with largely anonymous traditions; but there are specific authors as well who can profitably be mined for Cratinean (and other, see below) fragments. Most of them, it may be noted, belong to the latter half of the second century CE, and most noteworthy among them is Athenaeus of Naucratis (shortly before or around 200 CE) whose fifteen books of Deipnosophistai (Learned men at table)[12] never cease to amaze because of not only the extraordinary richness but also the tantalizing one-sidedness of the material they exhibit: they describe everything about and around the dinner table (including somewhat dubious guests like parasites and after-dinner sexual entertainment by hetairai), but almost nothing beyond. It can be shown that Athenaeus frequently draws

[10] One might add one item from the *Epimerismi alphabetici. in Homerum* (An. Ox. I 363,19 Cramer; now edited by A. Dyck, vol. 1 [1983] and vol. 2 [1995]), which also goes back to ancient philological work on Homer and provides us with Cratinus fr. 113 Kassel-Austin.

[11] Fifteen more items in all can be found in other collections of scholia (on Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, Thucydides, Theocritus, Aelius Aristides, Oribasius, and Basilius the Great).

[12] The work has unfortunately not come down to us in complete form but with substantial gaps especially at the beginning, where books I and II as well as a part of book III are lost and can now only be read in an epitome preserved in two manuscripts (called C and E) independent of each other; for the unabbreviated sections of book III–XV, just one manuscript (A) is our source. Besides these three sources for the text of Athenaeus, also the numerous quotes from the text by the Byzantine scholar (and later archbishop of Thessalonica) Eustathius have to be taken into account. It has long been thought that Eustathius' text of Athenaeus was ultimately more or less identical with manuscript A (see most recently W.G. Arnott 1996, 37–39 and in Braund-Wilkins 2000, 47–50), but now Olson and Sens (1999a, lxvii–lxx) and—somewhat shorter—Olson and Sens (1999b, 42–44) convincingly show that the Athenaeus of Eustathius was an already epitomized manuscript sharing a common ancestor with A.

on the same lexicographical tradition[13] that is still the basis for the Byzantine lexica mentioned above. He accessed this tradition, however, when it still contained almost all the riches of Alexandrian scholarship, while seven hundred or eight hundred years later, almost all of this had shrunk into tiny remnants.[14] In the case of Cratinus, Athenaeus yields 61 fragments, a number surpassed only by the *Photius Lexicon* and the *Suda*.

Even more Cratinea (at least in numbers, not necessarily in length and detail of quotations) can be found in the *Onomasticon* of Julius Polydeukes (or, in his Latinized form, Pollux), who dedicated this work[15] (ten books of what might be called "An Attic vocabulary ordered according to subject matter")[16] to the Emperor Commodus. It can be shown that Pollux often used the same sources as Athenaeus, namely, the lexicon of Zopyrion and Pamphilus.[17] All in all, Pollux gives us 78 fragments of

[13] In a number of cases, the huge lexicon of Zopyrion and Pamphilus (see above n. 6) is Athenaeus' almost certain source (on this, see Nesselrath 1990a, 66n5 and 77n38).

[14] Some exemplary cases: when quoting Cratinus fr. 54 Kassel-Austin in XI 501 D, Athenaeus follows this up with a learned discussion about the meaning of the word Βαλανειόμφαλος, starting with the great Alexandrian authorities in comic studies, Lycophron and Eratosthenes, and continuing with later scholars like Apion and Diodorus (both probably late first cent. BCE and early first cent. CE), Asclepiades of Myrlea, Didymus, and Timarchus (rather unknown, possibly misread for Timachidas of Rhodes). When we come across Βαλανειόμφαλος again in the later lexicographical tradition, all these references have vanished: Hesychius (B 147) still knows that the word was used by Cratinus (βαλανομφάλους· οὕτω Κρατῖνος ὠνόμασε ⟨τὰς φιάλας⟩ τὰς ἐχούσας ὀμφαλοὺς ἄνευ προσώπων), but some hundred years later, the *Photius Lexicon* (B 38) and the *Suda* (B 64) can only tell us that the word is found in comedy (βαλανειομφάλους· τὰς φιάλας οἱ κωμικοὶ καλοῦσιν). Again, Cratinus fr. 88 Kassel-Austin is presented by Athenaeus (XI 495 A, within a long catalogue of the various forms of pots and vessels) with the information that the Alexandrian scholar Callistratus (a pupil of Aristophanes of Byzantium, first half of the second cent. BCE), in his commentary on the play Θρᾷτται of Cratinus, explained the vessel type πελίκη as κύλιξ; and Athenaeus adds references to (and quotes of) other scholars discussing πελίκη: the Pergamenian scholar Crates of Mallus, Seleucus (a grammarian of early imperial age), and Euphronius. Already Athenaeus' contemporary Pollux, when dealing with the same Cratinus fragment (X 67), only mentions various explanations of the word without giving any references (προσθετέον δὲ τὰς ἐν Θρᾴτταις Κρατίνου πελίκας, ἢ κύλικας ἢ προχοίδια εἶναι δοκούσας), and in the later lexicographical tradition, there is no reference to comic usage whatsoever. Without Athenaeus, we would not even know that someone had once written a commentary on a specific play by Cratinus.

[15] It is often thought that the *Onomasticon* has come down to us only in an abbreviated form (see most recently Alpers 2001, 198: "in einer leicht epitomierten Fassung"), but Erbse (1965, 2392) did not share this opinion (without, however, providing arguments against it); on this question see also Nesselrath (1990a, 101 f. n93).

[16] Alpers (2001, 198): "Der attische Wortschatz nach Sachgruppen."

[17] See Nesselrath (1990a, 86, nn. 59–61, 93n82). Sometimes the question has been raised whether Pollux did use not Zopyrion–Pamphilus, but rather their epitome by

Cratinus. Much less can be found in the work of Pollux' apparent rival for imperial favor,[18] the Sophist Phrynichus—namely, 17 Cratinea, but seven more[19] can be traced back to a once much longer version (originally in 37 books) of his Σοφιστικὴ προπαρασκευή (The preparation of the speaker), of which now only a very meager summary survives (in the already mentioned manuscript Coislinianus 345; see note 7).[20] Phrynichus—compared to Pollux and others—was the propagator of a very severe Atticism in his time: he wanted people to use only Attic authors of the fifth century BCE as stylistic models for their own writings and accordingly condemned such "corruptors" of the true Attic tongue as Xenophon, Lysias, and Menander. In that perspective, the authors of Old Attic Comedy must have been very dear to him, and he probably cited them often to legitimate his choice of words.

Other authors of imperial time come in only for a reduced number of Cratinea. Plutarch quotes our poet eight times, almost always in one of his biographies that deal with Attic classical history (namely, the Lives of Solon, Cimon, and—most of all—Pericles, whom Cratinus attacked very often in his plays). In other authors, Cratinus comes up only once to three times,[21] the one remarkable exception being the second-century metrician Hephaestion, who provides us with fourteen quotations; this, of course, because Cratinus was rich in various unusual metrical forms, which Hephaestion wanted to document.

Apart from a few citations in other authors or works,[22] these are the main sources of the written remains of one of the most famous poets of Old Attic Comedy, a form of literature that had been singularly bound up with its own time (mainly the second half of the fifth century BCE) and space (Athens) and that could not really be appreciated as a work

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Julius Vestinus (see above note 6). As Pollux sometimes has the same comic fragment in a shorter and in a longer form as well mainly in book X, it may be that he did in fact use both Zopyrion–Pamphilus and their epitome; see Nesselrath (1990a, 94–99, n. 89).

[18] On this, see Nächster (1908).

[19] Cratinus frr. 371, 374, 377, 379, 381, 382, 498 Kassel-Austin.

[20] The unabbreviated work was still read by Photius in the ninth century; Alpers (2001, 198).

[21] In Dio Chrysostom, Aelius Aristides, Aelian, Clement of Alexandria, Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry.

[22] The most substantial of them being the tradition of the paroemiographers, who collected (and explained) proverbial sayings and documented them by quoting relevant authors. Almost half of the twenty entries for Cratinus (i.e., nine) can be traced to Zenobius, either in the vulgate or the Athoan recension.

of imaginative art, therefore, by later centuries.[23] This is proven by the fact that very little of Cratinus has been found on papyrus; so far, only two more substantial (papyrus) contributions to our knowledge of his work have turned up, namely, a summary (ὑπόθεσις) of the play Διονυσαλέξανδρος and fr. 171 Kassel-Austin, the parodos of the play *Plutoi* and parts of the subsequent scene (eighty-nine verses, in all—or what remains of them), on a papyrus datable to the second century CE.[24] There apparently remained one role for authors like Cratinus in an age (which began probably late in the first century BCE and lasted more or less until the fall of Constantinople in 1453) addicted to re-creating the old Attic language of the fifth century BCE as authentically as possible—namely, that of authoritative sources for "good" old-Attic words; this is why by far the largest segment of the Cratinus fragments is found in the lexicographical tradition or in authors (such as Athenaeus, Pollux, Phrynichus, and Eustathius) who are at least related to it.

The picture remains substantially the same when we look at another of the greatest representatives of Old Comedy, Eupolis (whose fragments number 494, with 5 *dubia*—a quantity only slightly below Cratinus' 514): again, the largest number of fragments is provided by the *Photius Lexicon* (125); substantial, but much lower numbers can be found in the *Suda* (58 fragments) and the *Lexicon Bachmannianum* (33 fragments). Another lexicon, which in the case of Cratinus did not yet account for a really big source of fragments, comes into more prominent view with Eupolis: the so-called *Etymologicum Genuinum*, which was compiled around the same time as the *Photius Lexicon*, which drew on a much bigger range of sources than Photius did,[25] and which became the basis of a whole number of other Byzantine etymologica.[26] The *Etymologicum*

[23] See the very telling remarks of Plutarch, complaining in his *Quaestiones convivales* 7.8.3 p. 711F (= Cratinus *testimonium* 32 Kassel-Austin) that in his time no one was able to enjoy Old Comedy, because you constantly had to turn to grammarians to explain obscurities of every kind!

[24] Otherwise there are only four short quotations (in papyrus glossaries or commentaries) of single words or expressions from Cratinus (frr. 85, 108, 177, 433 Kassel-Austin).

[25] See Alpers (2001, 203).

[26] These (the *Etymologicum Gudianum*, compiled in the tenth cent.; the so-called *Etymologicum Magnum*, dating from the eleventh or early twelfth cent.; the *Etymologicum Symeonis*, roughly of the same time; and the so-called Ps.-Zonaras of the first half of the thirteenth cent.) have very often to be consulted, too, because the two extant manuscripts of the *Etymologicum Genuinum* (A, a Vaticanus, and B, a Laurentianus; both of the tenth century) exhibit many gaps and have so far not been completely edited; see Alpers (2001, 203 f.).

Genuinum contains 30 Eupolidea (while only 18 Cratinea). Another Byzantine source that yields more for Eupolis (27 fragments) than for Cratinus (merely 16) is the learned Eustathius, who died as archbishop of Thessalonica in 1194: his importance—in our survey—lies in his participation in the great lexicographical tradition that he frequently exhibits in his massive commentaries on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer, in which he every now and then has preserved earlier lexicographical lore that had not made it into the Byzantine lexica current in his time. As for the other lexicographical works, the numbers for Eupolis are roughly the same as for Cratinus.

Regarding the scholia, the number of Eupolis quotations in the Aristophanes Scholia is even bigger (77 items) than for Cratinus; this may reflect the fact that Eupolis in his lifetime was Aristophanes' biggest rival[27] and therefore had to be dealt with in the scholarly task of commenting on Aristophanes even more frequently than the older poet.[28] Athenaeus and Pollux yield roughly similar numbers of Eupolidea (Athenaeus: 49; Pollux: 78) as Cratinea. Plutarch is—with 11 fragments—slightly better represented than in the case of Cratinus (with the majority again coming from the *Lives*). The possibly biggest difference in source analysis—when compared to Cratinus—may lie in the papyri: while only one Cratinus play had a substantial presence on one papyrus, Eupolis can so far boast of three plays on seven papyri, ranging in dates from the first to the fifth century CE—one for Μαρικᾶς (fr. 192, second cent.) and for Ταξίαρχοι (fr. 268, first cent.), two for Προσπάλτιοι (fr. 259, second to third cent., and fr. 260, first cent.), three for Eupolis' most famous play, Δῆμοι (fr. 99, fourth to fifth cent., fr. 100, second cent., and fr. 101, third cent.). Thus one play of Eupolis at least seems to have been actually read until late antiquity, and two others in high imperial times; the only other Old Comic poet who enjoyed similar (and even better) luck is Aristophanes.

Nevertheless, Eupolis' plays did not make it beyond antiquity, and our most substantial source for knowledge about him is the same as about Cratinus: the lexicographical tradition, which all in all has preserved 351 Eupolidea.

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[27] See Nesselrath (2000a) and Kyriakidi (2007).

[28] Other corpora of scholia are present in similar numbers in the Eupolis fragments as in those of Cratinus (e.g., scholia on Plato: Cratinus 13 items, Eupolis 11; scholia on Lucian: Cratinus 6 items, Eupolis 4; scholia on Euripides: Cratinus 2 items, Eupolis 1).

b. *Middle Comedy*

Middle Comedy—conventionally dated between the disappearance of Aristophanes (sometime after 388 BCE) and the appearance of Menander (first stage production in 321 BCE)[29]—is the least well-attested phase in the development of Greek comedy (so scarcely attested, in fact, that a number of renowned scholars have doubted its very existence);[30] not a single complete play has survived, and the heap of still extant fragments uncannily resembles disparate pieces of a gigantic puzzle of which only very rarely one piece can be joined to another. Even so, some patterns can be established, and this holds true for the transmission of Middle Comic fragments as well; having a closer look at the remains of two of its more important poets, Antiphanes and Eubulus, will show us that Middle Comedy in later times appealed—at least in part—to people with interests rather different from those we could detect for the reception for the remains of Old Comedy.

First is Antiphanes, a poet active from the 380s until sometime in the latter decades of the fourth century BCE:[31] of his astonishingly high output of plays (several hundred),[32] 327 fragments have been handed down to us under his name (with ten rather doubtful ones included). Of these, the lion's share has been preserved not (as in the case of Old Comedy) by the lexicographical tradition (which accounts for only 73 items),[33] but by the deipnological writer Athenaeus, who just by himself accounts for much more than half of all fragments, namely, 185 (with one doubtful item). The runner-up is an author who is about two hundred years (perhaps even some more) later than Athenaeus, who wrote—or

[29] For a slightly modified chronological conception of Middle Comedy, see Nesselrath (1990, 331–340).

[30] For names and references, see Nesselrath (1990a, 3–27).

[31] There are some inconsistencies in the evidence about the later years of Antiphanes' career; see Nesselrath (1990, 193 f.).

[32] For the various numbers transmitted, see my entry on Antiphanes in *DNP* 1 (Nesselrath 1996, 781 f.).

[33] The more detailed breakdown is: *Photius Lexicon* 16, *Suda* 10, *Lexicon Bachmannianum* 6, Hesychius 3, *Etymologicum Genuinum* 3, *Etymologicum Magnum* 1, Harpocration 2, Ps.-Zonaras 2, Ammonius 1. The biggest single provider within the lexicographical sources is the lexicon of the "Anti-Atticist" (29 items), which is a kind of negative confirmation as to why the lexica have preserved so few Antiphanea: Antiphanes' plays did not count as storehouses of good old Attic speech, but rather as representatives of an already diluted (and therefore unacceptable for purists like Phrynichus, who is present only once among the sources for Antiphanes fragments) form of it.

rather, collected[34]—extracts of earlier writers (both poetry and prose) that seemed to him worthy of conservation for their ethical content: Johannes Stobaeus. While Stobaeus is of almost no importance for the fragments of Old Comedy (he preserves just 2 fragments of Cratinus and 3 of Eupolis), he has to be cited 51 times for Antiphanes.[35] Athenaeus' close contemporary Pollux provides 35 Antiphanea, thus proving to be a still substantial though somewhat poorer source than for Old Comedy. Finally, the Byzantine scholar Eustathius is connected 39 times with Antiphanes fragments in *PCG*.[36] Apart from these "major providers," very little else from Antiphanes can be found in other authors: there is only one item in the scholia on Homer and only two more in other scholia; there are two in Plutarch (and one of them doubtful) and only four more in other Greek authors of the imperial age; and there is only one each in the paroemiographers and in Byzantine authors. In eight instances, papyri provide Antiphanean material, but in only one of these cases,[37] we may have a part of an actual manuscript of an Antiphanes play (as in the case of Cratinus and Eupolis); thus we have no evidence that after his time as author on the stage, Antiphanes ever served as a source for reading like some Old Comic poets and like Menander.

Eubulus is the poet most often explicitly called a writer of Middle Comedy.[38] He was active from (probably) the 370s until Demosthenic

[34] Which does not mean that he himself still read all the original texts of which he collected excerpts for his anthology: As his thematically arranged collection sometimes reproduces the same extracts more than once (i.e., under various headings under which their content may fall), he identifies his texts sometimes by name of author and title of work, sometimes only by name of author (see, e.g., Philemon frr. 77 and 78 Kassel-Austin); and there may be variations in the texts themselves, too (see again, e.g., Philemon fr. 78 Kassel-Austin). This shows that he already drew on earlier collections that probably varied in the detail of presentation of their material.

[35] Put in relation with the high number of Antiphanes' plays, this is still not a very high proportion of passages with moral content that were deemed worthy of being excerpted by later collectors. We will get more impressive numbers for New Comedy (see below for Diphilus and Philemon).

[36] In the case of Antiphanes and other Middle Comic writers, Eustathius drew more on Athenaeus (which means the Athenaeus epitome; see above n. 12 and Antiphanes frr. 5, 20, 30, 51, 55, 66, 69, 80, 109, 111, 127, 130 f., 133 f., 138, 145, 156, 161, 167, 170, 173, 180, 188, 193 f., 203, 205, 224, 227 f., 232 f., 279 f., 323) than on the lexicographical tradition, thus confirming the much lesser importance of the latter for the preservation of remains from Middle Comedy.

[37] Antiphanes fr. 34 Kassel-Austin may be just the end of a play manuscript; all other papyrus quotations of Antiphanes (frr. 247, 257, 263, 281, 315–317) derive from *gnomologia* or *florilegia*.

[38] See the six references enumerated in Nesselrath (1990a, 60).

times;[39] his output comprised more than one hundred plays (with fifty-seven or fifty-eight titles preserved), of which 150 fragments (3 doubtful ones included) have come down to us. Of these, the lexicographical tradition comes into play in only forty-two cases,[40] while Athenaeus provides 100 fragments (two thirds of the total!) and thus even a bigger share than in the case of Antiphanes. The part played by Pollux shrinks to thirteen items, while from Eustathius we get twenty. Scholia all in all account for only 5 fragments (2 of them from the Homer Scholia). Plutarch yields none, other imperial Greek authors only 2 (Byzantines 1). Stobaeus, too—and this is the one big difference compared to Antiphanes—comes in for only 1 fragment.[41] The paroemiographers contribute 4. No papyrus whatsoever provides any additional material.

If we looked at other poets attested for the period of Middle Comedy,[42] we would see a similar distribution of sources. The picture thus emerging goes a long way to explain why we can barely grasp the "specter"[43] of Middle Comedy today: contrary to Old Comedy, it held no great interest for people who looked for impeccable linguistic models to reconstruct the "authentic" Attic speech of old (thus only relatively few fragments in the lexicographical tradition); contrary to New Comedy (especially

[39] On the chronological evidence, see Nesselrath (1990a, 195 f.) and the entry on Eubulus in *DNP* 4 (Nesselrath 1998, 213 f.).

[40] The more detailed breakdown: *Photius Lexicon* 14 (with 1 doubtful item), the "Anti-Atticist" 9, *Suda* 6, *Lexicon Bachmannianum* 1, Hesychius 2, *Etymologicum Genuinum* 1, *Etymologicum Magnum* 3, Harpocration 3, Ammonius 1, others 2. As in the case of Antiphanes, Phrynichus is present with 1 item.

[41] In this respect, the remains of Eubulus look remarkably similar to those of the Old Comic poets Cratinus and Eupolis. It seems that already in antiquity, Eubulus was sometimes felt to be quite close to Old Comedy; the *Suda* (ε 3386 = *test*. 1 Kassel-Austin) at least calls him a μεθόριος τῆς μέσης κωμῳδίας καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς. See Nesselrath (1990a, 60, 196n31).

[42] For Alexis (who, may it be noted, at least in part has to be considered already a New Comic poet, as his career probably extended beyond the end of the fourth century: see Nesselrath 1990a, 199 and W.G. Arnott 1996, 15–17). See W.G. Arnott (1996, 34–44), who provides the following numbers: of 342 fragments in all, 212 (62 percent) are found in Athenaeus, 38 in the "Anti-Atticist," 26 in Pollux, and 27 in Stobaeus; these three account for 26 percent of the whole. For the remaining 12 percent, I may refer the reader to my review of Arnott's commentary in Nesselrath (2000c, 11): of these 12 percent (40 fragments), almost half (i.e., 17 fragments) can be found in important Byzantine representatives of the lexicographical tradition, that is, in Photius, the *Suda* and the *Etymologicum Genuinum*. The resemblances with the distribution of sources for Antiphanes and Eubulus are clear enough.

[43] Applied to Middle Comedy, this metaphor (*unfaßbarer Schemen* in German) was coined by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1899), reprinted in Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1935, 226n2) and was taken up by Gelzer (1984, 244).

Menander), it did not produce plays that could survive their limited time on the stage by becoming enjoyable stuff for leisurely reading (thus no surviving papyrus manuscripts of those plays), and its content of noteworthy and memorable sayings or aphorisms of edifying moral substance was rather limited as well (thus only a limited number of excerpts in Stobaeus). Against this background, it must strike us as an extraordinary oddity (and a big piece of luck for collectors of comic fragments) that, after all, there actually was one author, Athenaeus, who took great interest in at least a substantial part of that which Middle Comedy had to offer, namely, all of it that had somehow to do with food and drink (such as descriptions of elaborate dinner preparations and gastronomical festivities, catalogues of fish and other foodstuffs, and the activities of slaves, cooks, parasites, hetairai, all of them somehow revolving around tables loaded with food plates and wine pitchers and so on). And what is more: this author took this interest when the resources to satisfy it were still available, that is, the big lexica and glossaries still bulging with full and exhausting references put together by meticulous Alexandrian scholarship.[44] It may certainly be claimed that Athenaeus allows us only a very distorted view of what went on in Middle Comic plays; for it is barely conceivable that they were so full (to the exclusion of other matter) of cooks and parasites as his ample quotations suggest. However, these plays really must have contained a large number of such cooks and parasites—and plays from other periods considerably fewer of them—or we certainly should have more quotations from, for example, New Comedy (which is not the case, as we shall presently see). All in all, if someone claimed that—for us at least—Athenaeus is something like the "savior" of Middle Comedy, he would be guilty of only a slight exaggeration, if at all; for without Athenaeus and his gluttonous craving for literary manifestations of eating and drinking, the decades between Aristophanes and Menander would resemble even more a black hole for comedy than they appear today.

[44] Athenaeus provides us with by far the longest verse quotations (not only) of Middle Comedy: for example, Anaxandrides fr. 42 Kassel-Austin (71 anapaestic dimeters), Anaxilas fr. 22Kassel-Austin (31 trochaic tetrameters) Anaxippus fr. 1 (49 iambic trimeters), Athenio fr. 1 Kassel-Austin (46 iambic trimeters), Damoxenus fr. 2 Kassel-Austin (68 iambic trimeters), Diphilus fr. 42 Kassel-Austin (41 iambic trimeters), Epicrates fr. 10 Kassel-Austin (37 anapaestic dimeters), Mnesimachus fr. 4 Kassel-Austin (65 anapaestic dimeters), Sosipater fr. 1 Kassel-Austin (57 iambic trimeters), Straton fr. 1 Kassel-Austin (47 iambic trimeters).

c. *New Comedy*

Just as all poets of Old Comedy are today overshadowed by Aristophanes because of the simple fact that whole plays of him (and of no one else) can still be read (and performed), Greek New Comedy to us is almost synonymous with Menander for the very same reason. Menander might even be thought luckier than Aristophanes, for he had been lost for almost one-and-a-half thousand years after the end of antiquity almost as completely as all the other Greek comic poets (Aristophanes excluded) until by the late nineteenth century, papyrus finds started to bring him back, so that now we can again read (and in some cases perform) eight plays either completely or to a substantial extent and at least single scenes of ten others.[45] Without the papyri, Menander's literary remains would not look very much different—apart from being more numerous—than those of other New Comic poets, two of whom now shall be looked at in somewhat greater detail, namely, Menander's two great contemporary rivals Diphilus and Philemon.

Of Diphilus' one hundred plays (of which sixty-one titles have been preserved), 135 fragments[46] (of which 2 are of doubtful authenticity) have been preserved. Of these, the lexicographical tradition comes in for a number similar to those found in the cases of Antiphanes and Eubulus, namely, 56 items altogether.[47] The biggest share is again provided by Athenaeus, but with 51 fragments out of 135 (38 percent), the presence of this source is not as overwhelming as in the case of the Middle Comic poets. With 27 fragments (20 percent), Stobaeus looks slightly more important than in the case of Antiphanes (where he was responsible for 16 percent of the whole). Pollux and Eustathius provide nine items each, Plutarch just one and other imperial authors four more, the paroemiographers five, and there is only one certain quote (not from the manuscript of a play) on a papyrus. All in all, the distribution of sources for Diphilus looks similar to—though not quite like—that of the Middle Comic poets.

[45] For a short survey of these plays, see (Nesselrath 1999).

[46] Two additional ones (136 and 137 Kassel-Austin) are certainly spurious.

[47] The more detailed breakdown: *Photius Lexicon* 15, the "Anti-Atticist" 15, *Suda* 6, *Lexicon Bachmannianum* 1, *Etymologicum Genuinum* 4, *Etymologicum Magnum* 5, Harpocration 4, Ps.-Zonaras 1, Ammonius 1, others 4. As in the case of Antiphanes and Eubulus, Phrynichus is present with one item.

Things get more pronounced with Philemon. According to the *Suda* (= *test*. 1 Kassel-Austin), he is supposed to have written ninety-seven plays,[48] of which 198 fragments (with 4 doubtful ones included) are still extant. The breakdown of their sources shows that—with 48 items altogether[49]—Philemon is even less present in the lexicographical tradition than the three poets considered in the preceding paragraphs. There are similarly low numbers regarding Philemon's presence in scholia[50] and in Pollux (11 items) and Eustathius (9 items). More remarkable is the fact that Athenaeus is a source for only 27 fragments, that is, 14 percent of the total—a far cry from his numbers regarding the Middle Comic poets. The lion's share, however, now is provided by Stobaeus: 87 items, that is, 44 percent of the total. In a way quite comparable to Menander (who was the main source for the gnomic Menandri Monosticha), Philemon thus proved to be a poet with a penchant for memorable moralizing phrases, and so his sayings were eagerly snapped up by Stobaeus and incorporated into his massive Eclogae. In connection with this, it may be noted that Philemon is—apart from Cratinus—more present in paroemiographical collections than any other comic poet considered so far, namely, twelve times.[51]

The fate of New Comic poets is thus different from both that of Old and Middle Comic writers: after their life on the stage, they survived to a considerable extent as authors of memorable sayings.[52] Especially

[48] Sixty-three titles (four of which are doubtful) have been preserved; see the survey in my entry on Philemon [2] in *DNP* 9 (Nesselrath 2000b, 784).

[49] The more detailed breakdown: *Photius Lexicon* 15, the "Anti-Atticist" 10, *Suda* 8, *Lexicon Bachmannianum* 3, *Etymologicum Genuinum* 3, *Etymologicum Magnum* 4, Harpocration 2, Hesychius 1, others 2. As in the case of Antiphanes, Eubulus, and Diphilus, Phrynichus is present with one item.

[50] There are two items in the Homer Scholia, one in the Aristophanes Scholia, as well as five more in other scholia.

[51] Compared to these other poets, Philemon has a somewhat higher profile, too, in Greek authors of the imperial age: he is found two times in Plutarch, three times in Diogenes Laertius, and an additional twelve times in other authors. These numbers may reflect that his plays were read more frequently than those of other poets (though certainly not as frequently as those of Menander) or that gnomic excerpts of his plays were already much going around. That this was indeed the case is suggested by the fact that of nine instances in which identifiable verse quotations of Philemon exist on papyrus, six of them are provided by remnants of papyrus *gnomologia* (frr. 56, 85, 91, 94, 128, 129 Kassel-Austin), while so far no papyrus manuscript of Philemon's plays has been found.

[52] Another form of survival (which only New Comic poets and not those of the earlier phases of comedy attained) can only briefly be hinted at here, namely, as models for plays

in the case of Menander, their plays continued to be read until the end of antiquity, and in fact Menander may not have been the only New Comic poet whose plays were still read after their performances stopped: volume VIII of *PCG* presents 156 papyri, all of which are remains of once-existing papyrus manuscripts of comic plays that were written and read by people in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. It may well be surmised that the bulk of these plays (which cannot now be identified) were products of Menander, for he (in a way comparable to Euripides) enjoyed considerably greater success as a writer after his death than in his lifetime; but among these 156 papyri, there must also lurk a sizable number of plays written by his New Comic rivals. It is very much to be hoped that sometime, somehow, means may be found to identify these plays and thus expand our knowledge about New Comedy from being about just one major poet to several others who—at least during their lifetime—enjoyed similar (sometimes even greater) fame than he did.

2. *Textual Criticism in the Comic Fragments: Problems and Approaches*

Preliminary Remarks

Except for Menander (and a sizable number of anonymous comic fragments, see above), the cases are still relatively few where we can lay our hands directly on ancient manuscripts (or more precisely on the papyrus scraps that have remained of them) of comic plays that continued to be read in antiquity quite some time after their live performances had stopped. In all other cases (the eleven plays of Aristophanes that found their way into Byzantine manuscript transmission excluded), all the relics of Greek comedy found their way to us by means of the so-called secondary transmission—that is, incorporated as quotations in the texts of other works, and in their vast majority (more than two-thirds, that is), these quotations have been preserved by just one quoting authority.[53] It

by Roman comic poets. By that means, even an obscure poet like the otherwise almost totally unknown Demophilus has survived, because Plautus used his *Onagos* as model for his *Asinaria*.

[53] Of 514 fragments of Cratinus, only 153 (either fully or in part, sometimes only as a reference to one single word within the fragment) can be found in more than one quoting author or work, that is, about 29.7 percent of the total. With Eupolis, it is 148 out of 494, that is, almost exactly 29.9 percent. In the case of Antiphanes, it is 70 out of 327, that is,

is clear that in these cases, we are at the total mercy of the quoting author or work: if the various textual sources (provided they exist)[54] exhibit variants in the comic quotation and if there is no clear evidence (e.g., as in the case of manifest misspellings or metrical howlers) that one of these variants is undeniably wrong, it must usually remain unclear whether a variant was already in the text when the quoting author took over the quotation or whether corruption set in after the quoting work had been written.

Things can get more interesting—but sometimes also very hard to decide—when a fragment (wholly or partially) is provided by more than one source. In these cases we may get differing evidence pertaining not only to the textual form of the fragment but also to the title of the play it once came from and sometimes even to the comic poet it is ascribed to. In the following sections, I shall try to give a few characteristic examples for each of these categories.

a. *Textual Variants in More-than-Once-Quoted Fragments*

First, an example of how two different quoting authors may function as a stand-in for differing manuscripts traditions of a comic fragment: verses 2–5 of Cratinus fr. 150 Kassel-Austin (four of five hexameters from

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21.4 percent, and in the case of Eubulus 40 out of 150, that is, 26.7 percent. This downward trend is confirmed by our two samples from New Comedy: in the case of Diphilus, 32 out of 135 fragments are more than once attested (23.7 percent), in that of Philemon 38 out of 198 (19.1 percent).

[54] In some cases, our quoting authorities themselves have come down to us in only one manuscript, for example, the "Anti-Atticist" and some other representatives of the lexicographical tradition (Hesychius). Even where a quoting work has been preserved in more than one manuscript, the number of the manuscripts usually does not exceed a handful: in the case of Athenaeus, it is one (unfortunately somewhat damaged, see above n. 12) manuscript (A) for the unabridged version, and two (C and E) for the epitome (plus occasional quotes from Eustathius who used another manuscript of the epitome); with Pollux, it is seven manuscripts (FS, BCL, A, C), which rather frequently differ from one another (usually only slightly), representing, it seems, different versions of light epitomization of the original (see above n. 15). The *Photius Lexicon* is found in three (though variously truncated and abbreviated, see above n. 5) manuscripts: g (Galeanus), b (Berolinensis), and z (Zavordensis). For the *Suda*, one has to use mainly seven manuscripts (A, F, V, GIT, M; see the entry on Suidas in *RE* VII A, Adler 1931, 675 f.); for Stobaeus, three for books I and II (F, P, L) and three classes of manuscripts (STr, MAMac, LBr) for books III and IV (see the entry on Ioannes Stobaios in *RE* IX 2, Hense 1916, 2585 f.) It is one of the great merits of the editors of *PCG* to have set out the manuscript evidence for these quoting authorities (and for some other, rarer ones as well, if the need arises) very clearly and accurately.

the *Odysseis* of Cratinus, in which the Cyclops maliciously gloats on the "culinary punishment" he will mete out to Odysseus and his companions) have been preserved both by Athenaeus (IX 385C) and by Pollux (VI 68). I first give the Athenaeus version, then the Pollux version, and finally the text as edited in *PCG* (v. 1, only in Athenaeus: ἀνθ' ὧν πάντας ἑλὼν ὑμᾶς ἐρίηρας ἑταίρους . . .):

φρύξας ἑψήσας κἀπανθρακίσας (A: κἀπ'ἀνθρακιᾶς CE) ὀπτήσας (Ath.) v. 2
φρύξας καὶ ἑψήσας καὶ ἐπανθρακίσας (-ώσας cod. A) καὶ ὀπτήσας (Poll.)
φρύξας χἀψήσας (Edmonds) κἀπανθρακίσας κὠπτήσας (Bergk) (*PCG*)

εἰς ἅλμην τε καὶ ὀξάλμην κᾆτ' ἐς σκοροδάλμην (Ath.) v. 3
εἰς ἅλμην καὶ ὀξάλμην κᾆτ'ἐς σκοροδάλμην (-δάμνην codd. FS) (Pollux)
εἰς ἅλμην τε καὶ ὀξάλμην κᾆτ'ἐς σκοροδάλμην (*PCG*)

χλιερὸν ἐμβάπτων, ὃς ἂν ὀπτότατός μοι ἁπάντων (Ath.) v. 4
χλιαρὸν ἐμβάπτων, ὃς ἀνυπόστατός (cod. A: ὡς ἂν ὑποπτότατός cod. S: ὡς ἂν ὑποπτώματός cod. F) μοι ἁπάντων (Poll.)
χλιαρὸν ἐμβάπτων, ὃς ἂν ὀπτότατός μοι ἁπάντων (*PCG*)

ὑμῶν φαίνηται, κατατρώξομαι, ᾧ στρατιῶται (Ath.) v. 5
ὑμῶν φαίνηται (-εται cod. A), κατατρώξομαι, ᾧ στρατιῶται (Poll.)
ὑμῶν φαίνηται, κατατρώξομαι, ᾧ στρατιῶται (*PCG*)

In v. 2, right and wrong variants are about equally divided between Athenaeus and Pollux and, moreover, point the way to two slight editorial emendations; v. 3 shows a slight corruption in two manuscripts of Pollux; in v. 4, all three manuscripts of Pollux that contain the quotation exhibit a more serious corruption in one and the same place, while Athenaeus preserves the right text; and in v. 5, there is again a slight corruption in one Pollux manuscript. All in all, Athenaeus provides the more reliable text in this instance, but we may still be grateful for the necessary corrections the text of Pollux points at in v. 2.

In this example choices have been fairly easy. In a similar case things are a bit more difficult: Antiphanes fr. 206 Kassel-Austin (the description of an ἰατρεῖον) is found twice in Pollux' *Onomasticon*, first in IV 183 (ἐν δ' Ἀντιφάνους Τραυματίᾳ καὶ ταῦτα τῶν ἰατρικῶν σκευῶν· "κατεσκευασμένος / λαμπρότατον ἰατρεῖον εὐλάμπρος [*sic* A: -πρις FS] πάνυ / λουτηρίοις [*sic* A: λουτῆρσιν FS], ἐξαλείπτροις, κυλιχνίσι / σικύαισιν, ὑποθέτησιν") and then once more in X 46 (ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἰατροῖς ἐκλούτρων ὀνομαζομένων Ἀντιφάνης ἐν Τραυματίᾳ· "κατε-

σκευασμένος / λαμπρότατον ἰατρεῖον ἐγχάλκοις [*sic* ABCL: οὐ χαλκοῖς FS] παντο- / λουτηριδίοις [*sic* ABCL: -ίδιος FS] ἐξαλείπτροις, κυλικέσσι [*sic* FS: -κισιν CL] / σικιέσσιν [*sic* FS: σιτύεσιν CL], ὑποθέτοισιν").[55] The two versions vary so much (six out of ten words are not the same) that Pollux must have gotten them from two different intermediate sources.[56] Another case where the same author presents the same comic quotation at two different places with some textual variation—which again points to the fact that the quotation was provided by different intermediate sources in each place—is present in Antiphanes fr. 105 Kassel-Austin. These seven verses are quoted in Athenaeus' book XII (533 D) as well as in book XV (689 E), but while book XV correctly exhibits the words τὰ σκέλη at the end of v. 3, in book XII these words are replaced by the unmetrical expression τὰς χεῖρας, apparently an early gloss to explain τὰ σκέλη (after τοὺς πόδας).[57]

A probably much more interesting case of textual variance is presented by the evidence for Eupolis fr. 306 Kassel-Austin: the lexicographical tradition[58] cites an iambic trimeter from the play Χρυσοῦν γένος (*The Golden Generation*) to illustrate the meaning of the word ἀποπάτημα (shit, dung)—(A.) τί γάρ ἐστ' ἐκεῖνος and (B.) ἀποπάτημ' ἀλώπεκος (A: What, in fact, is that man? B: Just a piece of fox shit!). Now a reference to this very verse turns up in Athenaeus, too, but this time with the variant ἀποτράγημα (remains of a dessert), and the quotation is even used to illustrate the meaning of this word.[59] Editors have always opted for ἀποπάτημα, and Athenaeus has been accused of carelessness

[55] The edited form of the fragment is now "… κατασκευασμένος / λαμπρότατον ἰατρεῖον εὐχάλκοις (Salmasius) πάνυ / λουτηρίοισιν (Meineke), ἐξαλείπτροις, κυλιχνίσι, / σικύαισιν, ὑποθέτοισιν."

[56] For more evidence that Pollux probably got all his comic quotations not by directly reading the plays, see Nesselrath (1990a, 92–100).

[57] In another case where a gloss has replaced the original wording in one of the quoting works, metrics does not help us: in Eubulus fr. 30,3 Kassel-Austin, τὰς κύλικας (found in Ath. XI 471 C) is metrically equivalent to τακπώματ(α) (found in Moeris p. 199,6 Bk.). Here, however, a decision can be made on the grounds of parallel word usage, which shows that in this context τὰς κύλικας must be right (see the adnotation in Kassel-Austin).

[58] In this case, represented by the *Etymologicum Genuinum*, the *Suda*, and the *Lexicon Bachmannianum*; the *Photius Lexicon* breaks off after giving Eupolis' name.

[59] Ath. XIV 658 D: τὸ γὰρ λείψανον τῶν τραγημάτων καὶ τρωξίμων ἀποτράγημα εἴρηκεν Εὔπολις· σκώπτων γὰρ Διδυμίαν τινὰ ἀποτράγημα αὐτὸν εἴρηκεν ἀλώπεκος ἤτοι ὡς μικρὸν τὸ σῶμα ἢ ὡς κακοήθη καὶ πανοῦργον, ὥς φησιν ὁ Ἀσκαλωνίτης Δωρόθεος.

in transcribing his source,[60] but things may be more complicated: when describing the context in which Eupolis allegedly used ἀποτράγημα, he refers us to the author Dorotheus of Ascalon, a grammarian and lexicographer of the early imperial age, who presumably read ἀποτράγημα in the Eupolis verse, too. And we may even add a piece of evidence from the lexicographical tradition itself, which hitherto seemed quite unanimous in reading ἀποπάτημα: the entry α 6736 in the lexicon of Hesychius reads ἀποτράγημα· λείψανον βρώματος, which in fact gives us in very short form the gist of what Athenaeus says as well. With the support of Hesychius, it becomes a bit harder to blame the variant ἀποτράγημα on nothing more than a sloppy Athenaeus; perhaps we may even entertain the possibility that ἀποπάτημα and ἀποτράγημα both were rather old variants found in copies of Eupolis' play. Certainly, ἀποπάτημα has a much more invective sting in it and is therefore probably the word Eupolis himself wrote originally; perhaps ἀποτράγημα belonged to a "sanitized" or "laundered" version (in usum Delphini) of Eupolis' play out of which an echo of our verse came to Athenaeus by way of Dorotheus.

b. *Variant Titles in More-than-Once-Quoted Fragments*

Textual problems due to variants in different sources are common fare in works of antiquity, in fragments as well as in completely transmitted texts. A problem much more peculiar to fragments includes differing (which means contradictory) indications of provenance of a quotation. With completely transmitted plays, there is seldom a real problem as to their title; here, both manuscript indications (titles and subscriptions) as well as secondary quotations usually support each other very well (though in the case of double titles, there may be a certain variance as to which title is more in use or regarded as the primary one). In quotations of fragments, title indications (provided they exist) become part of the quoting text and can thus be equally corrupted as other parts of that text. Matters are not helped by the fact that comic poets (especially those of Middle and New Comedy, with their large outputs) sometimes used the same titles—either for totally new plays or for reworkings (the extent of which often remains unclear) of older ones—more than once, or slight variations of the same title. The opposite case may happen as well—that is, a totally different title may actually cover a slightly reworked second version of an already

[60] See, for example, Cobet (1873, xxiin1).

existing play (this, of course, we can only know if we are expressly told). Again I discuss a few examples to illustrate the problems confronting us in this area.

As a first example, let us take Antiphanes' play Γάμος—or is it Γάμοι? There are three fragments (frr. 71–73 Kassel-Austin) collected under these title forms. For one of the three, we have two quoting authors: Athenaeus IV 169 DE gives us two iambic lines and traces them to Ἀντιφάνης ἐν Γάμῳ, while the "Anti-Atticist" (p. 84,13) traces one word of these two lines to Ἀντιφάνης Γάμοις. Athenaeus, however, is not even consistent in his further references to this play: in IV 160 D (fr. 72) he again uses the singular, but in III 95 A (fr. 73) he uses the plural. Probably this is again an instance where the quoting author is dependent on intermediate sources and did not see an integral text of the play himself; the possibility of a simple textual corruption of a word ending can, of course, never be ruled out, but seems less plausible in this case, as we have two attestations each (and in one fragment by two different authors) of the two different titles. Moreover, Antiphanes was such a prolific author that he may conceivably have produced both a comedy called Γάμος (containing one marriage) and another called Γάμοι (probably containing a double or even a multiple marriage). As long as we do not get additional evidence (and there is precious little hope that we will), we will have to keep in mind both possibilities, that is, that Antiphanes either wrote only one play (either called Γάμος or Γάμοι) or that he wrote two.[61]

A somewhat different (and more easily solvable) case is presented by Pherecrates fr. 113 Kassel-Austin, a substantial passage (thirty-three iambic lines) from the Μεταλλῆς (The miners) of that Old Comic poet. The quotation is given in its full length (and with title ascription) by

[61] We have to deal with similar problems in the case of Antiphanes frr. 59–62 and 186–187 Kassel-Austin, respectively: in the first case, a play called Βοιωτία is attested by Athenaeus XI 474 E (= fr. 62), XIV 650 E (= fr. 60), and by Pollux X 88 (= fr. 61), while a play called Βοιωτίος is cited twice by Athenaeus as well (III 84 a = fr. 59, IX 367 F = fr. 61). In the second case, Athenaeus (II 60 DE = fr. 186) gives us three iambic lines and calls the play they once belonged to Παροιμίαι; in fr. 187 a note in the *Photius Lexicon* traces a certain word back to Antiphanes' Παροιμιαζόμενος. Again, the possibilities for just one play (and textual corruption of its title) and for two plays (of which one may—but need not—have been the reworking of the other) remain basically open. Another possible case of this kind is Eubulus frr. 46–48, where three quotations of the title Κατακολλώμενος (all three by Athenaeus) are countered by one exhibiting the form Κατακολλῶν (by Pollux, for fr. 46); here, however, the plausibility of simple textual corruption is greater than in the cases considered so far.

Athenaeus VI 268 D,[62] but lines 3–24 are quoted by Pollux, too (without giving the title of the play, however). In book X, Pollux provides another quotation of this passage (namely, of lines 30 f.), and this time he gives the title of the play as well, but not as Μεταλλῆς; of the four manuscripts here available, S has the form (ἐν) πετάλλη and *FCL* πετάλη. It is surely possible to explain these forms by textual corruption, and following Falckenburg, Kassel and Austin have corrected it to ἐν Μεταλλεῦσιν; however, there actually once existed a play by Pherecrates called Πετάλη (after a hetaira; Pherecrates frr. 142–149, of which 147 comes out of Pollux), and thus the possibility cannot be completely ruled out (though it may be remote) that the two verses stood in that play as well.

In other instances, we are expressly told that a play with one title is a reworking (a so-called διασκευή) of an earlier play with a different title; but even with that knowledge, we sometimes get cases where there remains room for doubt regarding to which of the versions the quoted fragment actually belonged: in XI 496 F, Athenaeus quotes two lines from a play by Diphilus (fr. 5 Kassel-Austin), which he calls Εὐνοῦχος ἢ Στρατιώτης, adding, ἐστὶ δὲ τὸ δρᾶμα διασκευὴ τοῦ Αἱρησιτείχους. Only about ten lines before (in 496 E), he gives almost the same verse quotation (omitting only the first three words) and now identifies it as Δίφιλος Αἱρησιτείχει (τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τοῦτο Καλλίμαχος [fr. 440 Pf.] ἐπιγράφει Εὐνοῦχον). Although these two remarks do not really describe the same thing,[63] they clearly suggest a closer relationship in content between the plays Αἱρησιτείχης and Εὐνοῦχος ἢ Στρατιώτης (or simply Εὐνοῦχος, as it is called in 496 E). Additionally, however, there are four more fragments whose ascriptions may—but not necessarily must—connect them to the later version of the play in question: in XV 700 E, Athenaeus quotes a line from Diphilus' Στρατιώτης (= fr. 6 Kassel-Austin), while the "Anti-Atticist" three times (= frr. 7–9 Kassel-Austin) refers to Diphilus' Εὐνοῦχος. Do these four fragments all belong to the διασκευή of the Αἱρησιτείχης? Probably yes; but we cannot be totally sure.[64]

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[62] Lines 13 f. are quoted additionally in Ath. III 96 A (again with title).

[63] In 496 F the two lines are traced to a play that is explicitly marked as the reworking of an earlier one; in 496 E they are said to come from that earlier play, for which an alternative title is then simply added. These two rather different expressions suggest that Athenaeus has again taken them over out of two different source contexts.

[64] It is in any case noteworthy that in XV 700 E Athenaeus identifies a quotation as Δίφιλος Στρατιώτῃ, whereas everywhere else the supposedly same play is either called Εὐνοῦχος ἢ Στρατιώτης or just Εὐνοῦχος; if the latter is to be considered an abbreviated form of the double title, it is surely more plausible to omit the second part than the first. Thus it cannot be excluded that Στρατιώτης was quite a different play.

A more instructive (but also more difficult) case of this kind is presented to us again (mainly) by Athenaeus: in VIII 358 D (= fr. 69 Kassel-Austin) we are told that Antiphanes wrote a play with the title Βουταλίων and that this play is a διασκευή of an earlier one (… ἐν Βουταλίωνι, ὅπερ δρᾶμα τῶν Ἀγροίκων ἐστιν ἑνὸς διασκευή). Now the title Ἄγροικοι for a play by Antiphanes is attested again in Athenaeus X 445 F (= fr. 4 Kassel-Austin) and in the lexicographical tradition as well,[65] but besides that we also get the female form Ἀγροικίδες (Athen. XV 692 F = fr. 3 Kassel-Austin), the singular form Ἄγροικος (Athen. VIII 358 F = fr. 69,14 Kassel-Austin; IX 392 E = fr. 5 Kassel-Austin; IX 396 B = fr. 1 Kassel-Austin; XIII 567 D = fr. 2 Kassel-Austin; last but not least, Pollux VI 54 provides fr. 6 Kassel-Austin), and even the double title Ἄγροικος ἢ Βουταλίων (Athen. VII 304 B = fr. 12 Kassel-Austin;[66] VII 313 B = fr. 69, 11–15 Kassel-Austin). If we wanted to take all these attestations at face value, we could imagine that Athenaeus is talking of five different (or at least partially different) plays: Ἄγροικος, Ἄγροικος ἢ Βουταλίων, Ἄγροικοι, Ἀγροικίδες, Βουταλίων. This is—given the high number of plays Antiphanes produced during his long career—not at all impossible, but not altogether likely, either, as the verses quoted in a number of places apparently come from the same passage, and this seems to be evidence that plays by Antiphanes called Ἄγροικος, Ἄγροικος ἢ Βουταλίων, and Βουταλίων are somehow related to one another.[67] Athenaeus even discusses a textual variant in line 14 of fr. 69 Kassel-Austin, which seems to confirm this relationship: while in 358 DE (ἐν Βουταλίωνι …) he writes Ἑλένης βρώματα (food for Helen), he remarks shortly afterwards, in 358 F, ἐν δὲ τῷ Ἀγροίκῳ Ἑκάτης βρώματα ἔφη (food for Hecate), and this

[65] By the *Photius Lexicon* and by the *Suda*; both provide fr. 7 Kassel-Austin.

[66] As if Athenaeus wanted to make our confusion even greater, he states here, τούτων τῶν ἰαμβείων ἔνια ἔστιν εὑρεῖν καὶ ἐν Ἀκεστρίᾳ καὶ ἐν Ἀγροίκῳ ἢ Βουταλίωνι ("Of these iambic lines [= fr. 127 Kassel-Austin, from the play Κουρίς], some can be found also in the plays Ἀκέστρια and Ἄγροικος ἢ Βουταλίων").

[67] This is the rather long (fifteen iambic trimeters) fr. 69 Kassel-Austin, which is quoted at full length in Athen. VIII 358 D under the heading ἐν βουταλίωνι, ὅπερ δρᾶμα τῶν Ἀγροίκων ἐστὶν ἑνὸς διασκευή (this attribution is the main reason why Kassel and Austin have edited the fragment under the title Βουταλίων). Additionally, parts of this passage are quoted in Athen. VII 313 B (lines 11–15, under the heading ἐν Ἀγροίκῳ ἢ Βουταλίωνι) and in VIII 358 F (a part of line 14, located here ἐν … τῷ Ἀγροίκῳ). In Nesselrath (1990a, 289n12) I have ventured the suggestion that Antiphanes might have produced two reworkings of an original play called Ἄγροικος: the second version might have been called Ἄγροικος ἢ Βουταλίων, the third simply Βουταλίων. In the present state of our evidence, this cannot, of course, be proved.

reading turns up in VII 313 B (ἐν Ἀγροίκῳ ἢ Βουταλίωνι) as well, where lines 11–15 are quoted.[68] Further confirmation for a kind of interrelationship of three plays with these titles might lie in Athenaeus' not altogether clear remark (in 358 D): ἐν Βουταλίωνι, ὅπερ δρᾶμα τῶν Ἀγροίκων ἐστὶν ἑνὸς διασκευή ("*quae fabula editio editio altera est et emendatio unius e 'Rusticis*.')"[69] Even, however, if three of the transmitted titles can thus be accounted for, there still remain the other two, Ἄγροικοι and Ἀγροικίδες: are they just corrupted forms of the title Ἄγροικος, or might they signify other once-extant plays? Unfortunately, no quick and easy answer is possible.[70]

c. *Variant Author Attributions in More-than-Once-Quoted Fragments*

In the last section I considered ambiguous ascription of play titles within one and the same author. Unfortunately, our evidence in quite a number of cases points to more disturbing uncertainties, namely, with regard to questions of authorship. It is a fact that both in tragedy—here the example of Sophocles' and Euripides' *Electra* may suffice—and comedy, authors

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[68] More than one and a half centuries ago, Meineke (in *FCG* III ad loc.) complained, "quid autem moverit poetam ut Hecatae cibis vilissimis Helenae cibos substituerit, adeo non intelligitur …" and suspected that Athenaeus had come across a textually corrupted version of the passage. Kock felt that the reference could be understood as a metaphor for worthless little fish, with which the passage deals ("in Hecates … sacris vilissima quaeque offerebantur"), but was at a loss as to what it might mean. In Nesselrath (1990a, 290n16) I have suggested that with these words the witty slave (who is one of the participants of this scene) might actually joke about the effeminacy of one of the other characters present ("these little fish are worthy food only for a Helena"). If so, both variants make sense and might really belong to two different versions of the play.

[69] This translation of the relative clause is proposed by Isaac Casaubonus (1621, 623.50 ff = Schweighaeuser 1804 [vol. 4], 644), who, however, also considered the deletion of the strange ἑνὸς and was followed in this by Lehrs, Meineke, and Kaibel; in *PCG*, Kassel and Austin put a crux in front of ἑνὸς (Kock proposed to read ὁμολογουμένως, Peppink (1936, 54) considered that ἑνὸς might have originated from the numerical designation "A," meaning a διασκευή of the play Ἄγροικοι Α).

[70] Other (more straightforward) cases where varying title attestations leave room for doubt as to whether we are dealing with only one play or with two different versions of it (or even two altogether different plays) include Antiphanes fr. 105 Kassel-Austin (seven iambic lines), which is found twice in Athenaeus, in XV 689 D with the location ἐν Θορικίοις ἢ Διορύττοντι, in XII 553 D only with ἐν Θορικίοις. The Antiphanes frr. 197–199 Kassel-Austin are variously attributed to a play titled Σκύθης (Athen. VI 243 C = fr. 197; VI 247 F = fr. 198), Σκύθαι (Poll. VII 59 = fr. 199), and Σκύθαι ἢ Ταῦροι (Poll. X 168 = fr. 199). Similarly, the Antiphanes frr. 200–203 Kassel-Austin are said to come from either a play called simply Στρατιώτης (Athen. VI 257 D = fr. 200; Poll. IX 48 = fr. 201) or more elaborately Στρατιώτης ἢ Τύχων (Athen. III 103 E = fr. 202; Athen. XIV 654 E = fr. 203).

rather often gave a title to a play that a predecessor had already used and that a successor might use again when he chose to tackle the same or a similar content or plot. In some cases, uncertainties about authorship of such plays must have arisen quite early, as already the Alexandrian librarians seem to have sometimes had difficulties in establishing unequivocal authorship.[71] They handled these questions in two different ways: when they had reason to doubt the attribution of a certain play to a certain author, but could not name another poet as alternative author, they might choose to say ὁ ποιήσας / γράψας (adding the title of the play); if they had "claims" from two different authors to the same play, they might provide both names and leave the question open. Again, a few examples may be helpful illustrations of these problems.

The first case is illustrated by the evidence for Eupolis' play Εἴλωτες (frr. 147–155 Kassel-Austin): of the nine fragments attested for this play,[72] five are explicitly attributed to Eupolis (by Athenaeus IV 138 E = fr. 147, Pollux IX 74 = fr. 150 and X 98 = fr. 155, by Erotian in his lexicon of Hippocratic words, η 4 = fr. 152, and by the paroemiographer Zenobius Athous III 61 = fr. 154), while four are ascribed to ὁ τοὺς Εἴλωτας ποιήσας (Athen. IX 400 C = fr. 153), ὁ τοὺς Εἵλωτας πεποιηκώς (Athen. XIV 638 = fr. 148), and ὁ τοὺς Εἵλωτας (without participle: Herodian, Περὶ μονήρους λέξεως II p. 917,1 L. = fr. 149, and II p. 933,1 L. = fr. 151). One may wonder what led the—ultimately Alexandrian—sources of these quotations to question the attribution to Eupolis,[73] if they could not supply an alternative author; but that they did question it cannot be doubted.[74]

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[71] See, for noncomic writers, Callimachus frr. 437, 442, 444–447, 449 Pfeiffer; for comic writers, Eratosthenes frr. 46 and 93 Strecker; Nesselrath (1990a, 175, 179).

[72] Already Meineke remarked that it is not probable that there once existed two (or even more) plays with the title Εἵλωτες, as no other comic poet is ever mentioned as author of such a play.

[73] Could it have been a consideration of chronology? We know that Eratosthenes used chronological proof to refute those who thought that Eupolis had been killed by an enraged Alcibiades at the beginning of the Sicilian expedition (see Eup. *test.* 3 Kassel-Austin = Eratosthenes fr. 48 Strecker = *FGrH* 241 F 19, together with Eup. Βάπτ. *testimonia* iv and v; Nesselrath 2000a, 234 f.). Perhaps Εἵλωτες was transmitted together with a chronological tag that did not fit with the known facts about Eupolis' career.

[74] A comparable case is the play Πέρσαι by Pherecrates: four times (Athen. III 78 D = fr. 139: Φερεκράτης δὲ ἢ ὁ πεποιηκὼς τοὺς Πέρσας; and the same phrase is found in XI 502 AB = fr. 134: Φερεκράτης δὲ ἢ ὁ πεποιηκὼς τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένους Πέρσας, and in XV 685 A = fr. 138; compare also Schol. Ar. *Ran.* 362 = fr. 140: τοὺς

For the second case numerous examples can be found, and in our first example an Alexandrian scholar actually did provide an alternative suggestion of authorship: Eratosthenes (fr. 46 and 93 Strecker) expressed serious doubts about the attribution of the play Μεταλλῆς to the Old Comic poet Pherecrates and proposed a certain Nicomachus as its real author.[75] These doubts are probably responsible for the phrase ὁ … πεποιηκὼς τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένους Μεταλλεῖς in Athenaeus XV 685 A (= fr. 114 Kassel-Austin); in other places, however, Athenaeus expresses no doubts about Pherecrates' authorship of this play (III 96 A = fr. 113,13 f.; VI 268 D = fr. 113).[76] Even more pervasive were the doubts pertaining to the play Χείρων: of its eight extant fragments (155–162 Kassel-Austin), five were only doubtfully attributed to Pherecrates[77] or downright ascribed to another unknown poet;[78] while in the case of the other three, Pherecratean authorship is not questioned.[79] And for

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ποιήσαντας τοὺς Φερεκράτους Πέρσας) Pherecrates' authorship is contested (without the attempt at an alternative ascription); but in all other instances (frr. 132, 133, 135, 136, 137, 141)—among them attestations by Athenaeus as well—no doubt is expressed.

[75] See Pher. Μετ. *testimonium* i Kassel-Austin (= Harp. p. 203,8 Dind.): ἔστι … δρᾶμα Φερεκράτους Μεταλλεῖς, ὅπερ Νικόμαχόν φησι πεποιηκέναι Ἐρατοσθένης ἐν ζ' περὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμῳδίας, as well as *testimonium* ii Kassel-Austin (= Phot. p. 32,11, ε 2203): Ἐρατοσθένης καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὑποπτεύει τοὺς Μεταλλεῖς. It is not clear who the Nicomachus championed by Eratosthenes is; he might be the same as Nicomachus ὁ ῥυθμικός, to whom the play Χείρων of Pherecrates was attributed by some (see below). See Nesselrath (1990a, 179n88, 250n22).

[76] See also Pollux VI 58 (= fr. 113,3–24), X 75 (= fr. 113,30 f.), and Erotian α 34 (= fr. 115 Kassel-Austin); all of these attestations attribute the play to Pherecrates without the shadow of a doubt.

[77] In Athen. IX 388 F. fr. 160 Kassel-Austin is traced to Φερεκράτης ἢ ὁ πεποιηκὼς τὸν Χείρωνα, while when presenting fr. 162 in VIII 364 A Athenaeus considers even three possibilities of authorship (the introducing words are τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τοῦ τὸν Χείρωνα πεποιηκότος, εἴτε Φερεκράτης ἐστὶν εἴτε Νικόμαχος ὁ ῥυθμικὸς ἢ ὅστις δή ποτε). In their comment on Pherecr. *test*. 3, Kassel and Austin (following Meineke 1839, 76 and Körte, *RE* XIX 2 [1938] 1986) trace the ascription to Νικόμαχος ὁ ῥυθμικὸς to Eratosthenes, as it was Eratosthenes as well who attributed the Μεταλλῆς to an author called Nicomachus (see above n. 75); this is plausible, but not provable beyond doubt.

[78] Athenaeus IX 368 B locates fr. 157 Kassel-Austin παρὰ τῷ τὸν Χείρωνα … πεποιηκότι τὸν εἰς Φερεκράτην ἀναφερόμενον; the same phrase is used in Athen. XIV 653 E for the introduction of fr. 158; and fr. 159 is located by the scholion on Ar. Ran 1308 ἐν τῷ εἰς Φερεκράτην ἀναφερομένῳ Χείρωνι (Eustathius in *Il*. 741.19, however, quotes line 1 from this fragment as Pherecratean).

[79] Ps.-Plutarch *De mus*. 30 p. 1141 C quotes the long fr. 155 Kassel-Austin, and the *Excerpta ex Nicomacho Geraseno* 4 p. 274.5 Jan refer to it; fr. 156,6 is cited by the Latin grammarian Priscianus (*inst. gramm*. 18.242, *GrL* III 328.13) as Φερεκράτης ἐν Χείρωσιν [*sic*], while the *Lexicon Vindobonense* (109.13) quotes l. 7 from the same fragment; fr. 161

yet another play of Pherecrates, the Ἀγαθοί, Athenaeus considers an alternative author, namely, the poet Strattis.[80] In all these cases, we usually cannot do much more than simply register the doubts about authorship (and alternative attributions) recorded in our evidence; we may surmise that there were real reasons behind those doubts, but most often we are not in a position to either verify or falsify them.

To another category of uncertainty belong cases in which questions about authorship do not necessarily relate to whole plays but to verse quotations. Let us again first illustrate this with an example from Old Comedy: Eupolis fr. 194 Kassel-Austin (two iambic lines from Μαρικᾶς) is attributed by the Plato Scholia (on *Soph*. 239 c and on *Phaed*. 60 b) to Eupolis; the lexicographical tradition, however, represented here by the *Photius Lexicon* and the *Lexicon Bachmannianum* traces the second line to the poet Pherecrates (without adding a play title). Two basic possibilities arise: either one of the attributions is plain wrong,[81] or both could be right.[82] It should be noted, too, that problems of this kind could probably only arise when quotations were no longer taken directly from the plays themselves, but from intermediate sources that somehow had acquired mistaken references. For most comic poets, this stage must have been reached by the early imperial age, when large lexica founded on Hellenistic scholarship provided the main source of information for Athenaeus, Pollux, and all the later lexicographical tradition.

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is attributed to Pherecrates by the scholion on Plato, *Soph*. 220a and by the *Etymologicum Magnum* 167.40. Against the doubts of Pherecratean authorship, see Dobrov and Urios-Aparisi (1995).

[80] See Athen. X 415 C (= fr. 1 Kassel-Austin) and XV 685 B (= fr. 2); two references to the play by Pollux (VII 198 = fr. 4 and X 47 = fr. 3), however, do not doubt Pherecrates as author. Further alternative ascriptions: Athenaeus III 123B comments on the Ἀλείπτρια of Antiphanes: φέρεται τὸ δρᾶμα καὶ ὡς Ἀλέξιδος, and in XIV 642 D on Alexis' Ὅμοια: τὸ δ' αὐτὸ δρᾶμα καὶ ὡς Ἀντιδότου φέρεται; and as author of the play Ἀργυρίου ἀφανισμός, he records Ἐπιγένης ἢ Ἀντιφάνης (IX 409 D).

[81] Usually the attribution to Pherecrates is thought to be mistaken (thus Meineke and Kaibel; see also Cohn 1884, 798n4); and indeed the speaker of these lines might very conceivably be the title figure of the play Μαρικᾶς, under which name the Athenian politician Hyperbolus was lampooned by Eupolis.

[82] Thus Kock and Kann (1909, 26).

Similar cases can more frequently be found in later Greek comedy.[83] According to Athenaeus III 127 B, Antiphanes wrote a play called Ἄντεια, from which a later play with the same title by Alexis differed only in very few places.[84] Similarly, both poets wrote a play with the title Ὕπνος, and Athenaeus states in XV 671 D that the same four iambic lines (Alexis fr. 243 Kassel-Austin) can be found in both plays, while in XIII 572 B he hesitates whether to attribute another three lines (Alexis fr. 244 K.–A) to Alexis or Antiphanes. An aphorism about bad gain, which was formerly attributed to Antiphanes (= fr. 270 Kock) because of a reference by Stobaeus, has now been given to Alexis (fr. 68 Kassel-Austin), because a papyrus *gnomologium* ascribes it to Alexis' play Ἐκπωματοποιός; but can we be sure that the lines were not used by both poets?[85] Eubulus fr. 18 Kassel-Austin is ascribed to that poet's play Γλαῦκος by Pollux (VI 67), but to Antiphanes by the Athenaeus epitome (I 28 CD), and in fact Antiphanes has written a Γλαῦκος too (see fr. 76 Kassel-Austin). Even in Athen. III 75 C—where the attestation Ἀντιφάνης ἐν Κρησί has been corrected by Porson to Ἀπολλοφάνης ἐν Κρησί (= fr. 5 Kassel-Austin), because the very same lines have been attributed to Apollophanes (who in fact wrote a play called Κρῆτες) by the lexicographical tradition[86] and because nowhere else is a play Κρῆτες attested for Antiphanes—even in this instance it cannot totally be ruled out that Athenaeus did not make a mistake after all, because at least more than one hundred of the titles of plays Antiphanes once wrote are simply unknown to us.

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[83] This may be connected with the fact that repetition of titles is much more frequent in Middle and New than in Old Comedy: there are rather numerous examples of plays called Ἄγροικος/-οι, Ἀδελφαί/-οί, Ἀλείπτρια, Ἀνασῳζόμενος/-οι, Ἀποκαρτερῶν/-οῦντες, Ἄσωτος/-οι, Αὐλητής/-τρίς/-τρίδες, Βοιώτιος/-ία, Γάμος/-οι/-ῶν, Δίδυμαι/-οι, Ἔμπορος, to name just a few.

[84] τὸ δ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο δρᾶμα φέρεται καὶ ὡς Ἀλέξιδος ἐν ὀλίγοις σφόδρα διαλλάττον. A similar case is described in Athen. Epit. I 25 F: Εὔβουλος δέ φησιν· ἄτοπον δὲ τὸν μὲν οἶνον εὐδοκιμεῖν ἀεὶ κτλ. (fr. 122 Kassel-Austin), … τὸ αὐτὸ δὲ καὶ Ἄλεξις σχεδὸν ἀπαραλλάκτως (fr. 284 Kassel-Austin), τοῦ σφόδρα μόνου κειμένου ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀεί.

[85] Similarly, Antiphanes fr. 318 Kassel-Austin, attested as Antiphanean by Stobaeus, is given to the play Φίλαυλος of Theophilus (fr. 12 Kassel-Austin) by Athenaeus XIII 563 A.

[86] *Photius Lexicon* 646.22 = *Etymologicum Genuinum* B (*Etymologicum Magnum* 793.26) = *Lexicon Bachmannianum* 405.23.

d. *Assumed Falsifiers, Interpolators, and Reworkers: The Cases of Alexis' Ἀσωτοδιδάσκαλος and of Philemon fr. 114/ Straton fr. 1 Kassel-Austin*

The last two cases I shall discuss will confront us once more—in an extraordinarily complex way—with the whole range of questions we have to deal with when venturing into the mysterious country of Greek comic fragments.

In VIII 336 D, Athenaeus lets one of his table-savvy Sophists (his name is Democritus, surely an allusion to the famous Presocratic) expound the full extent of his extraordinary literary and bibliographical knowledge: gearing up to quote twelve iambic lines from Alexis' Ἀσωτοδιδάσκαλος (The teacher of debauchery), Democritus hastens to add that he has to quote this passage from an intermediate source (Sotion of Alexandria), for—though he himself has read more than eight hundred plays of the so-called Middle Comedy!—he did not come across this particular play, nor could he find it in the big library catalogues of Alexandria and Pergamon. This boastful showing off has made more than one scholar suspicious: how could Sotion, a scholar of the second century BCE, have read a play by Alexis that previously had not made it into any of the big collections at the centers of the Hellenistic world? Already more than two hundred years ago,[87] this question led to the suggestion that the passage was not genuine Alexis at all, but a later forgery grafted onto his name. In our time the foremost proponent of this view is Geoffrey Arnott;[88] building his case even more on perceived linguistic aberrations in this passage from Alexis' usage in other fragments than on its peculiar transmission, Arnott argues "that this alleged fr. … formed part of the Cynics' war on hedonism, and that its forger fabricated it … to illustrate the enemy viewpoint in an anti-Epicurean pamphlet composed in the 3rd or 2nd century" (821). The question remains whether this really is a plausible reconstruction. Can we really be sure what Alexis could say and what not, when we probably have only about 0.63 percent of all the verses he ever wrote?[89] Is it totally impossible that some part of his vast production came to Alexandria (and thereby to Sotion) in a somewhat more delayed and roundabout way?[90] And—another important point—was Alexis in the

[87] See the bibliographical note at the beginning of Ἀσωτοδιδάσκαλος, *PCG* II 37.

[88] Recently in his commentary on Alexis (1996, 819–821), but also already more than forty years earlier in W.G. Arnott (1955, 210–216).

[89] For this calculation, see Nesselrath (2000c, 20 f.).

[90] In Nesselrath (1990a, 69n13) I suggested, too, that though the play itself never

third or second century BCE a sufficiently prominent target for the kind of forger imagined by W.G. Arnott? Wouldn't such a man have turned rather to Menander or some of the other big names of New Comedy?[91] So, this may be another case where we may have to believe what Athenaeus—through the mouth of his speaker Democritus—tells us: that some remains from Greek comedy were preserved in a less straightforward way than others,[92] which were early on incorporated within Alexandria's big library.

The case to be considered last is even more interesting, and again we have to start with Athenaeus: in IX 382 B, he quotes a long passage (forty-seven iambic lines) from an otherwise almost totally unknown comic poet called Straton, a long monologue by a rather angry Athenian bourgeois who had to deal with an impertinent cook who would spout only Homeric language at him. Now in 1938, a papyrus[93] was first published that contains—or so it seems—the very same monologue, but in a somewhat shorter form, comprising only thirty-seven lines:[94] in the papyrus version, vv. 9 f., 12, 16, 22, and 26–33 of the Athenaeus quotation are not

made it to Alexandria, Sotion could still have found a reference (with quotations) to it in the works of earlier Alexandrian scholars who dealt with comedy, like Lycophron, Euphronios, or Eratosthenes.

[91] The *testimonia* on Alexis collected by Kassel and Austin (*PCG* II 21–23) do not suggest that he enjoyed similar fame as Menander, Diphilus, and Philemon. In this connection a remark by Gellius (2.23.1 = Alexis *testimonium* 11 Kassel-Austin) may be significant: Gellius acknowledges that Alexis belongs to the comic poets who provided models for the Roman playwrights, but he comes only fourth after Menander, Posidippus, and Apollodorus of Carystus. A likely case where a forger used the name of famous comic poet is Diphilus fr. 136 Kassel-Austin.

[92] Compare the case of Athenio fr. 1 Kassel-Austin, a long speech by a cook, which Athenaeus (XIV 660 E) explicitly acknowledges to have taken over from King Iuba II of Mauretania (who lived in the first decades of the first cent. BCE and the first decades of first cent. CE and wrote a Θεατρικὴ ἱστορία in seventeen books). Athenio may have been a contemporary of Iuba (see Athen. VIII 343 E), and thus his plays could not yet have been collected by the great Alexandrian scholars; see Nesselrath (1990a, 71 f.).

[93] Pap. Cair. 65445 of the third century CE, reedited by Austin (1973) as *CGFP* 219.

[94] Verses 1–3 and 34–36 have vanished in a lacuna, but surely must be supplied for the papyrus version as well. At the end, this version is three lines (vv. 48–50) longer than the Athenaeus quotation, and debate about these three lines is not yet finished: while the *PCG* editors have kept these lines at the end of the papyrus version, Zwierlein (1990, 48) has argued that these lines already represent a later addition to the original speech, just like the internal enlargements of this speech that are found in the Athenaeus quotation (see above). In fact, v. 47 would be a more effective end to that speech than v. 50 is now. If, then, we accept Zwierlein's argument, the original speech would have contained only thirty-four verses, compared to forty-seven or fifty of the enlarged version.

present, but that shorter dialogue runs smoothly enough and exhibits no serious gaps; in fact, Kassel has shown that vv. 9 f. do not fit very well after 6–8, because they alter quite abruptly the joke about the word μέροπες, which was introduced in the preceding lines.[95] The other additions either extend—or make somewhat plainer—the joke that was made in the lines before (this is the case with vv. 12, 16, and 22), or they introduce explicitly the notion of the Homerizing cook (vv. 26–33),[96] which elsewhere in this speech is only implicitly present. So what do we make of these two versions—a shorter, probably earlier one, and a longer, probably later one—of the same comic speech? Who produced the additions and for what reason? Before we try to think of an answer, yet another fact has to be taken into account: the introduction of this speech (namely, v. 1 to the first half of v. 4) is quoted a second time by Athenaeus (in XIV 659 B), but there not as belonging to Straton, but to the considerably more famous comic poet Philemon (= fr. 114 Kassel-Austin). The papyrus version lacks any author attribution; thus it is at least possible (and will remain so, until contradictory evidence turns up) that the papyrus version represents the original speech as written by Philemon,[97] while the longer version quoted by Athenaeus belonged to a play by Straton, which was a reworking (a διασκευή) of Philemon's play.[98] We have already come across other examples, where a later poet took up a play of an earlier one and produced another version of it.[99] If this assumption is right—it is in any case more plausible than to suspect a literary plagiarizer or interpolator[100]—something similar seems to have happened here as later in Roman comedy, where successful plays by Plautus were brought again on the stage after his lifetime, but then rather often in a considerably changed (i.e., usually expanded) textual form.[101] Likewise,

[95] Kassel (1974, 122 = Kassel 1991, 311).

[96] This notion gets taken up again only in vv. 48–50, which is one of Zwierlein's (see above n. 93) main arguments that these verses are a later addition on the same lines as 26–33.

[97] Except perhaps for the last three lines; see above nn. 94 and 96.

[98] This suggestion was made in *nuce* by Webster (1953/1970, 145); see now Kassel (1974/1991, 125/314).

[99] See above n. 84.

[100] For earlier assumptions of this kind, see again Kassel (1974/1991, 125 f./314 f.).

[101] For this, see Zwierlein (1990, 5–55; 1991, 228–235). One may very well argue over Zwierlein's numerous proposals to delete lines and even whole passages from the transmitted texts of Plautine comedies, but the basic fact as such—that there were reworkings of Plautus' comedies for reproductions onstage, and that in these reworkings many textual enlargements were made—cannot be doubted.

Philemon's play may have been very successful (if the rest of it was similarly witty and fast paced as this preserved speech, it really should have been a success) and thus may have inspired a later poet to acquire a share of this success by reproducing it.

Conclusion

Having dealt with numerous examples of comic fragments and in many cases not having been able to reach clear and assuring results, we may well come to the sobering conclusion that there is much more to be questioned about them than to be really known. Still, for all the uncertainties that we are left with after looking at the often pathetic remains of what once must have been a vast cosmos of frequently amusing and entertaining—sometimes even dazzlingly brilliant—comic plays, we may still think that we are able to catch at least a glimpse every now and then of this former wealth. We must, however, always be aware of the many things we simply cannot definitely know and not let ourselves be carried away by (sometimes all too easy) speculation, or we will only get a mirage of the world of Greek comedy and not a real insight. For all the tantalizing problems Greek comic fragments offer, without trying to understand something about their transmission and how to deal with their ambiguities, we have no chance of putting poets like Aristophanes and Menander into the right perspective; and we may always hope that at least some of our many questions may at some future time be answered by a papyrus.

CHAPTER TWELVE

STRUCTURE AND METER

B. Zimmermann

1. *Preface*

In chapter 12 of *Poetics* (1452b14–27), Aristotle proposes an analysis of tragedy that differentiates between the following constituents: prologue, episode, exodus, and choral song (*khorikon*). A choral song, in turn, will be either a parodos (entrance song) or a stasimon (standing song)—that is, all songs following the parodos in which the chorus takes its place in the orchestra. It should be noted that variants such as monodies and exchanges between chorus and actors (*kommos* and *amoibaion*, respectively) are not found in every tragedy. The term *prologue* is defined as the entire sequence prior to the entrance of the chorus. Taken as a whole, all the material between choral songs is termed an *episode* (*epeisodion*), while the *exodus* is the final sequence beyond the point where no choral songs remain.[1] Until recently many scholars had appealed to the authority of Aristotle in analyzing the form and structure of Greek comedy. Indeed, the extant tragedies have long been forced into the Procrustean bed of Aristotelian definition with little regard for the stage action and the structure that it suggests. Owing perhaps to the loss of Aristotle's treatment of comedy in the second book of the *Poetics*, the genre has been spared the abuses endured by tragedy.[2] Freedom from Aristotelian taxonomy has especially facilitated the study of the structure and formal peculiarities of Aristophanic comedy.

Thaddeus Zielinski's morphology of comedy[3] has remained fundamental to the structural analysis of Old Comedy. His contribution has

[1] For chapter 12 of the *Poetics*, cf. Taplin (1977, 470–477); Halliwell (1987, 121 ff.). For the individual concepts, cf. the relevant entries in *DNP*.

[2] Nevertheless, it is recommended to use the naturalized Aristotelian *termini technici*, provided that one does not apply them in a rigid manner.

[3] Zielinski (1885).

been extended and deepened by the studies of Mazon[4] and Händel.[5] The last fifty years have seen the publication of a series of monographs devoted to individual constituent elements (*Bauformen*)[6] and their morphology: the epirrhematic agon,[7] parabasis,[8] second parabasis[9] as well as the various choral parts.[10] Although the prologue has also been subjected[11] to structural analysis, the main emphasis in the study of this element has been on its function in plot development.

The structure of a fifth-century comedy arises from the interaction between chorus and actors. While the lyric (sung) parts belong to the chorus, the actors express themselves in the iambic trimeter and other spoken meters appropriate to their respective characters. The trimeter approximates the spoken word quite closely in terms of variety and flexibility (*Poetics* 4.1449a21–24). When chorus and actors engage each other in dialogue, they usually employ a recitative[12] featuring an iambic, trochaic, or anapaestic tetrameter catalectic. Monodies, or solo arias, are usually found within paratragic contexts where authentic ritual song is out of the question (*Acharnians* 263–279, *Lysistrata* 1247–1272, 1279–1294, 1296–1315). The monody is especially prominent in the two plays concerned in extenso with tragedy (*Thesmophoriazusae* 1015–1054, *Frogs* 1264–1277, 1309–1328, 1331–1363, cf. also *Wasps* 317–323).[13] Thus, in terms of performance, a fifth-century comedy resembles an opera rather than modern play.[14] Owing to the prevalence of trochaic, iambic, and anapaestic rhythms, comic verse differs from that of Sophocles and Euripides and is more comparable to the verse of Aeschylean tragedy.[15]

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[4] Mazon (1906).
[5] Händel (1963).
[6] So termed by Jens (1971).
[7] Gelzer (1960).
[8] Sifakis (1971a); Hubbard (1991); A.M. Bowie (1982).
[9] Totaro (1999).
[10] Zimmermann (1985a, 1985b).
[11] Cf. especially Koch (1968); Kloss (2001, 204–285).
[12] Greek *parakatalogé*; cf. Perusino (1968, 23–28); M.L. West (1992a, 40).
[13] Cf. Zimmermann (1985b, 1–73); for the parody of tragedy, cf. Rau (1967); for the parody of dithyrambic choral lyrics, cf. Zimmermann (1997).
[14] For musical arrangement of Greek dramas of the classical age, cf. Zimmermann (1993a, 1993b).
[15] Cf. Zimmermann (1985a, 253–257). With all necessary precaution, one would be able to explain the remarkable coincidence between Aeschylus and Aristophanes in their use of so-called epirrhematic composition by pointing out that only in the year 486 was comedy included in the festive program of the Great Dionysia. That is, from the point

2. *The Constituent Elements (Bauformen) of Greek Comedy*

Structurally, fifth-century comedy and tragedy exhibit considerable differences.[16] It was only in Menander's time (late fourth century) that comedy was to lose its specific structural characteristics and assimilate itself to tragedy. The constituent elements and metrical variety typical of a fifth-century Aristophanic play disappeared entirely from New Comedy. In the latter we find only spoken dialogue and recitative with very few exceptions. Passages in longer meters are rare.[17] The chorus does not have any relation to the plot, and the choral parts are reduced to intermezzi occupying the intermissions of the plays consisting henceforth of five acts.[18] The texts of these interludes have not come down to us and may not have originated with the poet himself.[19]

The most remarkable constituent element of fifth-century comedy is the parabasis,[20] an interlude in the action delivered by the chorus directly to the audience. Although a parabasis interrupts the plot, it does not actually stand outside the context of its respective comic plot. Indeed, it may exhibit both verbal and situational references to the plot and action of the play.[21] For example, the leader of the chorus in the parabasis of *Frogs* (686 ff.) underscores the demand of the comic chorus for

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of view of its institutionalization, we encounter the same phase of development in both Aeschylean and Aristophanic work, about fifty years after its official inclusion in the festive program. Furthermore, it is a remarkable fact that we can establish in both types a development from a form previously dominated by the chorus to one dominated by the actors.

[16] For the differences, cf. Zimmermann (2006a, 36–44); for the structure of Menander's comedies, cf. Holzberg, Menander (1974); Goldberg (1980); cf. also Zagagi (1994).

[17] Catalectic trochaic tetrameter can be found in Menander *Dyskolos* 708–747, *Perikeiromene* 267–353, *Samia* 421–615, 650–737, *Sikyonios* 110–149, frr. 186, 187 Kassel-Austin; Philemon fr. 178 Kassel-Austin; Diphilos fr. 23 Kassel-Austin. In keeping with the practice of Euripidean tragedy, this meter is employed in scenes of heightened excitement with frequent changes of speaker, but also in serious monologues. (cf. Menander *Dyskolos* 708 ff. with Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 1368–1401). Catalectic iambic tetrameters are first documented in Menander *Dyskolos* 880–958 (in the exodos), anapaests in Menander *Kolax* fr. 7 Koerte/Thierfelder, Leukadia fr. 258 Koerte/Thierfelder, ithyphallici (- ⏑ - ⏑ - -) in *Phasma* fr. 3 Koerte/Thierfelder. Cf. Gomme and Sandbach (1973, 36 ff.).

[18] For the act division, cf. Sommerstein (1984b).

[19] For the annotation *XOPOY* (literally, [part] of the chorus) in the papyri and manuscripts, that is, the indications that a choral part occurs at this point, and for the post-classical comic chorus, cf. Maidment (1935, 1–24); R. Hunter (1976, 23–38); Pöhlmann (1977, 69–81).

[20] Cf. Sifakis (1971a) and Hubbard (1991).

[21] Cf. for this especially A.M. Bowie (1982); Hubbard (1991); Zimmermann (1985b, 206–220).

permission to give the city of Athens political advice, thereby anticipating the play's concluding theme of saving the city (*Frogs* 1419, 1500 f.). In its fullest form, the parabasis consists of seven parts—three simple elements and four that are related to each other as pairs. The parabasis is introduced by the *kommation* (literally, snippet), delivered in anapaestic or lyric[22] meters, which serves as a segue from the action of the play into the parabasis. There follows the parabasis proper, which is also referred to simply as "the anapaests"[23] because of its characteristic meter (anapaestic tetrameter catalectic).[24] In this central passage, the chorus leader speaks in the name of the chorus or on behalf of the poet. The chorus leader may even speak as the poet himself about his role in society, about the nature of his art, or about the relationship of playwright and audience.[25] The passage in anapaestic tetrameters ends in the verbal fireworks of the so-called *pnigos*, or choker, in which the chorus leader delivers a rapid-fire coda without metrical breaks (i.e., without catalexis), interruption, or a pause for breath.

The second section of the parabasis, the so-called epirrhematic syzygy, belongs entirely to the chorus. It consists of two metrically identical lyric parts, an ode and antode, that reflect the ancient form of a hymnic call for the gods (*hymnos kletikos*). There follows the epirrhema, so called because it is a follow-up speech, that is, recitative following a sung passage. The epirrehma and its counterpart the antepirrhema consist of sixteen or twenty catalectic trochaic tetrameters. At this point the chorus sings and speaks about itself and its role in the play and explains its mask.

The sequence of sung and recited parts exhibited in the parabasis is typical of fifth-century comedy and appears in a slightly modified form also in other parts of the play. The most important of these is the constituent element (*Bauform*) known as the epirrhematic agon. Like the parabasis, the comic agon typically exhibits "epirrhematic" structure.[26] In the agon, the protagonist engages the chorus or another actor in an often heated debate, the point of which is to justify his plan. The bipartite form of the epirrhematic agon is invariably introduced by metrically cor-

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[22] *Clouds* 512–517 (after the anapaestic start 510 f.) *Birds* 676–684.

[23] For example, *Knights* 504, *Birds* 684.

[24] In *Clouds* 518 ff. the parabasis proper features so-called eupolideans (⏑⏑–⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑ –⏑–⏑⏑–⏑); cf. Dover (1968b, 164 f.).

[25] Cf. especially *Knights* 507 ff., where Aristophanes extends the relationship of the Athenian audience to its comic poets, engaging the history of Attic comedy and acknowledging his precursors Magnes (520 ff.), Cratinus (526 ff.), and Crates (537 ff.).

[26] Cf. Gelzer (1960).

responding choral songs (ode and antode, respectively).[27] In the ode, the chorus expresses an opinion on the meaning of the impending debates or sides already with one of the parties. In the antode, the chorus summarizes or expresses admiration for the arguments presented. There follow the *katakeleusmos* (command) and *antikatakeleusmos*, delivered by the chorus leader in catalectic tetrameters. These verses refer to the discussion in the epirrhema and antepirrhema.

The moderating function adopted in this part by the chorus and chorus leader respectively is underscored by the meter. The *katakeleusmos* anticipates the anapaestic pattern of the epirrhema and antepirrhema. As in the parabasis, a *pnigos* may follow these anapaests (of epirrhema and antepirrhema) in a climactic torrent of uninterrupted argumentation. The entire epirrhematic agon may be capped by the so-called *sphragis* (seal), verses singing the praises of the one whose arguments have prevailed in the agon (e.g., *Wasps* 725 ff.). The bipartite form naturally elicits a clash of speech and counterspeech. Aristophanes, however, does not adhere to this schema strictly. Thus, in quite a few comedies like *Birds* (451 ff.) and *Lysistrata* (476 ff.), he has a single character, the comic hero, deliver the entire agon. This departure from convention enables the protagonist to articulate his position at some length without having to engage an opposing view. Epirrhematic structure may also be employed in the confrontation scenes, which tend to follow immediately on the entrance of the chorus (parodos). The epirrhematic form is clearly specific to Old Comedy, its signature structure, so to speak, tailored to the close interaction of chorus and spectators, as well as to the collaboration of stage and orchestra. As a rule, therefore, it belongs before the parabasis, after which the chorus loses its direct influence on the action and plot.[28]

Old Comedy reserves a prominent role in the plot for the chorus. Consequently fifth-century plays feature numerous *amoibaia*,[29] a term for chorus and actors engaged in antiphonal singing. In *amoibaia*, the chorus either propels the plot by actively participating in it or, alternatively, interprets the plot and exhorts the characters to action. The various roles that the chorus can assume in the *amoibaia* are given formal, structural expression in a given scene. Thus when the chorus is itself a

[27] Cf. Zimmermann (1985b, 108–140).

[28] Cf. Zimmermann (1985b, 221–234).

[29] Aristotle *Poetics* 24, 1452b 24 uses the concept *kommos* (from *koptein*, to beat one's breast in lamentation) to mark a song of lamentation (*threnos*) shared by chorus and actors. It is recommended to use *kommos* in this reduced meaning and to use *amoibaion* generally for the antiphonal singing of chorus and actor(s).

vehicle of dramatic action, the poet employs the epirrhematic form in catalectic tetrameters, which are delivered in recitative, after the choral entrance. When, however, the chorus serves to interpret the action, an iambic syzygy is used, as a rule after the parabasis. That is, ode and antode of the chorus are separated by spoken verses in iambic trimeter. The *katakeleusmos*, a couplet in catalectic tetrameters[30] whereby the chorus leader initiates an action or debate, is indicative of the significance of the chorus in the epirrhematic syzygy. An iambic syzygy following the parabasis, in contrast, does not have a *katakeleusmos*. In this case the plot develops solely amongst the actors, without immediate influence or participation of the chorus. In such contexts the chorus acts instead as observer of the action, reacting with emotions ranging from envy and admiration to enthusiasm, depending upon how it views the comic hero and his plan.

The composition and structure of an ideal fifth-century comedy[31] may be represented as follows. In the prologue, criticism of conditions in the city suggests to the protagonist an idea for rectifying a deplorable situation. Because the poet is especially concerned with holding the audience's attention at the beginning of a play, the introductory sequence is extremely rich in ideas and distinguished by events occurring in rapid succession. The information necessary for understanding the plot is either given immediately in an expository monologue as in *Acharnians* and *Clouds* or, far more commonly, with some delay. In the latter case, the spectator is initially presented with an incomprehensible situation and he must wait to be enlightened.[32] This might truly be called a dramatic riddle that is resolved only in the course of the play.[33]

Next there follows a long sequence of scenes including the parodos, the

[30] Except at *Birds* 336–338 where the *katakeleusmos* consists of two and a half verses.

[31] Of course, one must add two qualifications: (1) we can only make definite statements about Aristophanic comedies, and (2) the art of a poet like Aristophanes consists precisely in playing with traditional elements and conventions to permanently shatter the expectations of the audience. For methodological difficulties involved in assessing other fifth-century comic poets, cf. Harvey and Wilkins (2000).

[32] *Knights* 36 ff., *Wasps* 54 ff., 87 ff., *Peace* 50 ff., *Birds* 30 ff. From 411 onward (*Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazusae*), the exposition is no longer given *ad spectatores*, but developed in dialogue. This fits the tendency established with *Lysistrata* to dramatize the plays in detail and to avoid elements that disrupt the dramatic illusion; cf. for this Newiger (1975, 266–282 = Newiger 1996, 302–313).

[33] Accordingly, at *Peace* 47 the concept of "riddling" (αἰνίττεσθαι) is to be found, an element associated with the cult of Dionysos. Aspects of the latter are far more prominent in satyr plays and comedies than in tragedy. Cf. Seaford (1984, 41 ff.); Voelke (2001, 273–283).

choral entrance, as well as a succession of scenes that stand in immediate relation to the appearance of the chorus. In distinction from tragedy, the parodos of a comedy occurs relatively late (certainly never before verse 200).[34] This entire sequence of scenes is best understood as a parodos complex,[35] in that it is a constituent element coherent with respect to plot development and dramatic technique. The final form of this structural element essentially depends upon the role assumed by the chorus in the play, its attitude toward protagonist, and his plan in particular. When the chorus supports the plan of the comic hero, the protagonist will appeal to the chorus for help (*Knights* 242 f., *Peace* 296–298).[36] If, however, the chorus has taken a hostile stance toward the protagonist, it will appear to act out of a motivation to thwart his plan (*Acharnians* 204 ff., *Lysistrata* 254 ff.).[37] There is yet a third possible configuration in which the chorus makes its entrance without knowing anything of the plans of the other stage figures (*Wasps* 230 ff., *Thesmophoriazusae* 295 ff., *Frogs* 316 ff.).[38] In this case the chorus, therefore, must first be apprised of events before it can react with approval or rejection. Often, when the chorus faces an antagonist with hostile intentions, the choral entrance leads directly into a sequence of debate scenes exhibiting epirrhematic form. Such scenes of conflict or debate reveal that epirrhematic structure was invented especially to facilitate an interaction between both realms of the Greek theater, that of the orchestra and the stage, of chorus and actors. Being an active character (dramatis persona) in its own right, the comic chorus must engage one or more of the other stage figures directly. It is the dramatic purpose of these debate scenes to establish an understanding

[34] This can be explained by the peculiarity of comedy, which in distinction from tragedy has to offer new material (καινὰ λέγειν). It is therefore necessary to give a more extensive exposition than in tragedy. In the latter, as the comedy writer Antiphanes (fourth century) writes mockingly in the *Poiesis* (fr. 189, 5 ff. Kassel-Austin), already the mere dropping of a name like Oedipus suffices to remind the spectator of the entire plot.

[35] Cf. Zimmermann (1985a, 6–149; 1996b, 182–193).

[36] Aristophanes plays with the "call for help" theme that occurs in comedy and satyr play. At *Clouds* 263 ff., he elaborates this form into a festive invocation of the *Clouds* in the form of a ὕμνος κλητικός. The hoopoe's song at *Birds* 227 ff. is similarly a hymn of invocation in the form of a polymetric monody.

[37] At *Lysistrata* 319 ff., a second chorus of old women appears to support Lysistrata's plan. This comes as a surprise to the old men who oppose the female protagonist. The audience, though, must have expected an additional half chorus on the basis of the reduced number of the members (choreutes) of the male chorus.

[38] In the second and third configurations discussed here, the entrance of the chorus takes place *in scaena vacua*. This bears comparison to the eavesdropper scenes in *Acharnians* and *Frogs* where an actor steps aside and observes the chorus.

between the opponents and to employ words and arguments rather than violence. This is, in turn, the cue for the follow-up discussion, the epirrhematic agon,[39] in which the protagonist either masters his antagonist through the power of his words or teaches him a better way. This marks the culmination of the comedy and the point at which the comic hero has brought his plan to fulfillment. The protagonist's triumph is followed by the parabasis that concludes the first part of the play and marks the climax of the comic performance. This choral interlude may be followed by a series so-called episodic scenes, which present the consequences of the new state of affairs brought about by the protagonist. A series of incidental characters come and go, each seeking to participate in the success of the hero. Since the protagonist, as a rule, dismisses such intruders rather brusquely, such sequences are sometimes referred to as "dismissal scenes." The individual scenes are punctuated by songs in which the chorus commends the comic hero to the audience (*makarismós*) or offers satirical commentary. While inspired perhaps by recent events, songs of the latter sort usually bear only a tangential relation to the action. Alternatively, the chorus may strike up an antiphonal song with the protagonist, an *amoibaion* directed primarily at expressing its admiration for him. Many plays[40] feature a second parabasis (*Nebenparabase*)[41] consisting of ode, epirrhema, and *pnigos* and the corresponding counterelements (hence an epirrhematic syzygy). Such a reprise of the parabasis marks a more powerful interruption of the dramatic action in the second half of a comedy. Finally, once the protagonist has defended his New Order against unpleasant intruders and parasites, the comic performance concludes with the exodus, a sequence typically devoted to celebration. Chorus and actors depart in a celebratory procession.[42]

This overview should have made sufficiently clear that a steady repertoire of traditional forms and structures was available to the comedy writers of the fifth century. The poets, especially the good ones, were not, however, in any way bound slavishly to these constituent elements. Rather, their art consisted exactly of playing with the expectations and experience of an audience schooled by frequent visits to the theater.[43] Through specific elements and sequences, a poet leads the spectators to

[39] For this, cf. Gelzer (1960).

[40] *Knights* 1264 ff., *Clouds* 1115 ff., *Wasps* 1265 ff., *Peace* 1127 ff., *Birds* 1058 ff.

[41] Cf. Totaro (1999).

[42] In *Peace* and *Birds* the comedy concludes with a wedding procession, in *Wasps* with a burlesque dance. See Zimmermann (1996, 121–132).

[43] Cf. Gelzer (1975, 283–316; 1996, 194–215).

expect conventional developments in plot and action. However, at the last moment, by omitting a truly necessary and expected element such as a *pnigos*, for example, the poet can suddenly frustrate the spectators' expectations and take the play in an utterly new direction. In the stagecraft of Aristophanes, such play with expectations and conventions represents a masterful development.[44]

The structure of New Comedy, as exemplified by Menander's plays, represents a radical departure from fifth-century practice. The central role of the chorus in the dramaturgy of Old Comedy is attested by the high percentage of sung parts in the Aristophanic corpus. Remarkably, the chorus disappeared entirely from New Comedy as a vehicle of dramatic action.[45] Its sole purpose was to subdivide the play into the now-fixed five-act sequence. For us, the chorus of this period is distinguished by its absence, a series of missing entertaining entr'actes (music between acts), marked by a single word in our texts. What the chorus sang we do not know. The choral parts no longer stem from the pen of comic poets and are therefore not preserved in the papyrus texts. In their place is the simple annotation *XOPOY* (of the chorus), that is, the choral part.[46] One could very well assume that the members of the chorus (choreutes) recited popular melodies and songs having nothing whatever to do with the plot.[47] Perhaps these were pièces de resistance from the classic comedies of the fifth century that were also recited at symposia. Within the span of two generations from Aristophanic comedy rich in forms and modes of performance, there developed a theater of dialogue and conversation (as opposed to song). Spoken verse was enhanced at points by passages in longer meters marking decisive turns and climaxes of the plot in the manner of Euripidean tragedy.[48] We can no longer reconstruct in any detail how this development took place. Still, the last extant comedies of Aristophanes, *Ecclsesiazusae* and especially Wealth, already show a clear reduction of the choral parts and the diminishing significance of the chorus in the plot and action. Especially in Wealth of 388 BCE, the chorus is merely an external accessory without dramatic significance, a tribute, as it were, on the part of the poet to his genre that properly required a chorus.

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[44] Cf. Zimmermann (1998b, 275–287).

[45] Cf. Maidment (1935) and R. Hunter (1979).

[46] Cf. Pöhlmann (1977).

[47] Aristotle *Poetics* 18, 1456a 29 f., describes these songs as *embolima* (insertions), whose invention he ascribes to the tragedian Agathon.

[48] See previous note 17.

3. *Meter*

A comic poet of the fifth century had at his disposal a multitude of metrical forms, which he could incorporate into a performance.[49] Ancient metrics[50] are quantitative. Therefore, the rhythm of a verse does not result from the alteration between stressed and unstressed syllables, but from the sequence of short (˘) and long (-) syllables. At specific spots in the verse, both a short and a long syllable are possible (the so-called *anceps* [x̆]). The different possibilities of combining short and long syllables lead to a variety of different metrical forms. The spoken verse of the drama is iambic trimeter, consisting of three iambic meters (x̆-˘-). *Anceps*, both longs and shorts in this meter (at least in comedy) can also be replaced by a double short, and iambic meter offers the appropriate framework for the spoken verse, since it approximates spoken language most closely.[51] Recited parts employ longer verses, usually catalectic[52] tetrameters of an iambic,[53] trochaic,[54] or anapaestic[55] nature. For sung passages the comic poet could draw upon a great wealth of meters. For the lyric parts of Old Comedy, one has to distinguish between meters specific to comedy and meters inspired by, or directly borrowed from, the elevated genres (tragedy, choral lyric). Original comic rhythms are marked by their simplicity and thereby exhibit their roots in folk tradition. They are based predominantly on an iambic or trochaic rhythm that is commonly punctuated by syncopation or catalexis—elements found in folk songs and simple cult songs, respectively. Comedy usually employs the more complex metrical forms of elevated genres for parody of genre, style, or text. Along with the meter, in most cases the linguistic form shifts into an exaggeratedly exalted mode of expression. This phenomenon is particularly clear in the case of dochmiacs, a flexible Greek meter that can assume a variety of forms (x̆--x̆-)[56] and that is employed in tragedy

[49] The metrics of Aristophanic comedies have a large bibliography; cf. O. Schroeder (1909); White (1912); Prato (1962); Zimmermann (1985a, 1985b, 1987a); L.P.E. Parker (1997).

[50] Cf. the handbook of M.L. West (1982).

[51] Aristotle emphasizes this in the *Poetics* 4, 1449a25–28.

[52] Such verses involve a truncation of a colon or metron end in comparison with others (a so-called catalexis).

[53] x̆-˘-x̆-˘-˘-x̆-˘-x̆--

[54] --˘-x̆-˘-˘-x̆-˘-˘-˘-˘-

[55] ˘˘-˘˘-˘˘-˘˘-˘˘-˘˘-˘˘-˘˘--

[56] For potential and documented forms, cf. Conomis (1964, 23–50).

for lyric scenes of the greatest excitement. Much the same can be said of comic use of Ionic meter (⏑⏑– –), which evokes an oriental, alien, or a Dionysiac ambience.[57]

The extensive range of metrical forms gives the impression that, in composing a play, the poet did not distribute them at random, but that a particular poetic purpose is associated with each metrical choice. This assumption is confirmed in examining what specific content is associated with particular meters and what function a given meter serves in a play as a whole. In this connection one can distinguish between "characterizing" and "evocative" functions. The former indicates that through the rhythm, which is reflected somehow in the choreography, the performers are presented and defined either in their role for the entire play or specifically for the scene in question. "Evocative" implies that the meter (and with that, of course, the accompanying music that does not survive)[58] stirs certain feelings in the spectator associated with traditional forms such as cult hymns, wedding songs, *encomia* (*makarismoi*), satirical songs, and so on, or the style of tragedy and other elevated forms (choral lyrics, especially dithyrambs). In many cases—for example, in the Ionic—both functions can blend or alternate.

The metrical analysis of the entry of the chorus (parodos) documents impressively how Aristophanes employs specific metrical forms in order to characterize the chorus: catalectic iambic tetrameters are well suited for the lumbering gait of older people (*Wasps*, *Lysistrata*, *Ecclsesiazusae*, *Wealth*).[59] This thesis is supported by the parodos of *Ecclsesiazusae*, in which young women mimic old men (278 ff.). The catalectic trochaic tetrameter expresses haste and aggressiveness (*Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Peace*, *Birds*). The cohesion between the roles of the chorus, plot, and meter can be shown clearly in *Wasps* and *Lysistrata*. In *Wasps*, as soon as the old people, aroused by the shamelessness of the young Bdelykleon, reveal their true nature as wasps, the meter changes from a catalectic iambic tetrameter in the beginning to trochaics, which convey their arousal (415 ff.). Similarly in the debate scenes in *Lysistrata*, both half choruses switch from the iambics of the entrance to trochaics (614 ff., 781 ff., 1014 ff.).

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[57] Cf. Zimmermann (1987b).

[58] For music, cf. Zimmermann (1993a, 1993b), for dance, Zimmermann (1996a).

[59] Cf. Perusino (1968). In *Wasps* a special case may be observed: syncopated catalectic iambic tetrameter (248–272: ×⏑– –×⏑– ⏑/– ⏑– ⏑– –) follow the regular catalectic iambic tetrameter, which provides rhythmical support for the unsteady progress of old men down a muddy street.

The lyric (i.e., sung) parts of the parodos are metrical variations of the respective entrance meter: trochaics become cretics (-⏑-) and paeonics (⏑⏑ ⏑- and -⏑ ⏑⏑ respectively), and recitative yields lyric iambics (i.e., verses), which are composed of elements traceable to the basic iambic meters (e.g., baccheus: ⏑--; molossus: ---; cretic: -⏑-; choriamb: -⏑⏑-; spondee: --). The odes of the parabasis, where the chorus addresses its deity and engages in self-presentation, demonstrate clear evidence for the cohesion of the role of the chorus and the metrical form. Both in *Acharnians* and *Wasps*, the odes are delivered in the paeonic-cretic rhythm, which was also already employed in the lyric parts of the parodos to characterize the chorus.

As a comparison of meters in individual comedies shows, one can only speak of this characterizing effect with respect to a trochaic and iambic rhythm. The characterizing function, however, is only sustained as long as the chorus is employed as a vehicle of dramatic action (especially in the parodos-complex). Both meters can also perform other functions at other points in the drama, especially in the episodic scenes following the parabasis. Thus, for example, the catalectic iambic tetrameter signals the departure of the chorus in the exodos.

For other meters as well, we can assume a complex process of evocation that is bound up with characterization. On another level, specific associations of different rhythms contribute to their function in metrical characterization of sorts. The Ionic meter (basic form: ⏑⏑--)[60] illustrates especially well the interaction of evocative and characterizing functions. In the serenade of the wasp-chorus for their colleague Philokleon who is locked up (*Wasps* 273–289), the impression of an old-fashioned melody is suggested through the combination of Ionics and dactylo-epitrite meter.[61] This, in its turn, lends excellent support to the characterization of the chorus in verses 219 f. In this passage, for example, they are announced by Bdelykleon as lovers of the long-outmoded songs in the style of Phrynichos, Aeschylus' precursor and contemporary in tragic art. The spectator finds confirmation of the announcement of the chorus by Bdelykleon in the unsteady gait of the old people (syncopated, catalectic iambic tetrameter) and their old-fashioned rhythms

[60] Cf. Zimmermann (1987b).

[61] This meter is typical of choral lyrics. It is composed of dactylic (-⏑⏑-⏑⏑- [pentameter]) and so-called epitritic elements (-⏑-), which are connected by ancipitia. Cf. M.L. West (1982, 139–141).

and songs. In Agathon's monody in *Thesmophoriazuae* (101–129),[62] the impression of difference and strangeness arises on account of the polymetric form, where free Ionic meters are interspersed in different forms (cf. V. 120f.). On another level Agathon himself, not just his compositions, is thereby characterized as different, as uncommon in a negative sense. On top of this, the Ionic rhythm and the related Phrygian melody are related to the East[63] and awaken various associations connected to the Orient (luxury, lasciviousness, and the erotic). The reaction of Mnesilochos, who feels sexually aroused by Agathon's singing (*Thesmophoriazusae* 130–133), underscores this. Finally, in the parodos of *Frogs*, a third range of usage of the Ionic rhythm is shown clearly. While the chorus recites its entrance song in an Ionic rhythm, it exhibits itself as follower(s) of Dionysus, since the Ionic rhythms that appeal to the emotions are properly placed in the Dionysus cult originating in the East.[64]

In the episodic scenes following the parabasis, traditional forms of song are evoked like *encomia* (makarismoi), wedding songs (*hymenaioi*), and other forms associated with daily life. Here the favored meters are acephalous[65] Aeolic types such as the telesillean[66] and reizianum.[67] This becomes especially clear in instances where Aristophanes plays with traditional forms of song. The spectator is reminded of a specific form through metrical and musical signals and invited to compare the song just heard with its referent. In many instances specific associations are suggested by a metrical shorthand of sorts, that is, by few short periods or colons or through conspicuous disruption of the responsion in the metrical correspondence of strophe and antistrophe.[68] In *Peace*, for example, in verses 951–953 and 1034–1036, there occurs a significant disruption in responsion. The Iambics in the ode (951–953) correspond to acephalous Aeolic measures (telesilleia, reizianum) in the antode (1034–1036). The

[62] Cf. Zimmermann (1985b, 7–13).

[63] Cf. the parodos of the Aeschylean Persians (65–125).

[64] Cf. Euripides *Bacchae* 64–88.

[65] Literally, "headless," that is, the first element of the meter is lacking.

[66] o-⏑⏑-⏑⏑-.

[67] o-⏑ ⏑⏑ -, the catalectic form of the telesillean.

[68] For the disruption of responsion, cf. Trachta (1968); Domingo (1975); Romano (1992). It is difficult to specify the range of freedom in responsion with any degree of precision since textual corruption is always a possibility. In significant cases like the example cited above, we can only speak of potential responsion, or the possibility of responsion.

iambics support, as often, mockery,[69] and the Aeolic measures are appropriately chosen to fit the content—in this case, praise of the protagonist.

The evocative effect of the meter is more widely employed in the parodies.[70] Through specific metrical forms, especially those uncommon in comedy, the parodied originals are called to the spectator's mind. We can distinguish three strategies here:

1. Both language and meter of the original are parodied. (*Thesmophoriazusae* 101–130, 1015–1054, *Frogs* 1264–1277, 1285–1295, 1309–1328, 1331–1363). Aristophanes achieves comic effects by exaggerating the linguistic and rhythmic peculiarities of the original as in a caricature. The metrical and linguistic extravagance and mannerisms of the original are thereby underscored and put up for ridicule.
2. The parody operates only on the level of language while the meter remains comic. In such a case, typical comic meters like paeonics and cretics support an elevated diction that, in the end, does not fit the rhythm (e.g., *Acharnians* 208–218, 223–233, *Birds* 1069 f., 1099 f.).
3. Finally, there are instances in which only the rhythmic form is parodied while the language remains colloquial or drops quickly from an exalted beginning back down to a colloquial register. This strategy is seen clearly in those passages where typical tragic meters like dochmiacs and the dactylo-epitrite support colloquial diction (e.g., *Acharnians* 358 ff., 385 ff., 489 ff., 566 ff.). Aristophanes is particularly fond of using this technique in satirical songs. In the first verses, he evokes an exalted original both metrically and linguistically. He then shifts abruptly to mockery and colloquial language while maintaining the metrical structure of the exalted original.

Careful analysis on the level of the meter provides an impressive contribution to the interpretation of Aristophanic comedies in terms of structure and characterization. Insofar as content and language are determined by a multiplicity of discourses, the virtuoso composer may evoke different texts through glancing allusions on a number of levels. Meter is one such level that offers insight into the poet's design. The wide variety of metrical usage interacts productively with the variety of discourses

[69] For this original function of the iambic meter, cf. Aristotle *Poetics* 4, 1448b 31 f.

[70] For the parody of tragedy, cf. Rau (1967), for the reflexes of lyric forms, cf. Kugelmeier (1996).

incorporated in the composition of a comic text: the technical jargon of medicine, philosophy, political rhetoric, and so on. In other words, the metrical framework participates fully in the complex, polyphonic nature of fifth-century comedy.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE LANGUAGE OF OLD COMEDY

ANDREAS WILLI

I. *Language of Old Comedy*

1. *Introduction*

Among the literary genres of classical antiquity, Attic Old Comedy is perhaps the one in which language plays the most important role. Even if we do not subscribe to the view that Old Comedy aimed exclusively at humoristic entertainment, it is obvious that the comic poet's main task was to make his audience laugh, and it is equally obvious that a large part of this laughter is provoked by a firework of verbal art. Surprisingly, however, there are relatively few in-depth studies of this rich field. As a consequence much of what is set out on the following pages would merit a more detailed investigation. An attempt will be made to highlight the main issues, but any claim to comprehensiveness would be preposterous.

The presentation is divided into two parts. The first concentrates on general topics such as the generic background and methodological considerations (sections 2–6), Old Comedy's basic grammar (sections 7–12), dialect variation (section 13), and stylistic variation (sections 14–16). Many of the examples are taken from the comedies of Aristophanes, our only nonfragmentary source of Old Comedy. Against this background, the second part presents a short portrayal of ten of the principal fragmentary authors; the focus is on those fragments which, from a linguistic point of view, contain the most interesting material. The bibliographical references given in the endnotes to several sections are not exhaustive, but they provide starting points for further research.[1]

[1] A more extensive bibliography can be found in Willi (2002a). Indispensable for

2. *Genre and Dialect*

Ancient Greek was differentiated into various local dialects. Since some of these dialects show more similarities or common features than others, it is possible to place each dialect in a larger dialect group. Traditionally, four or five main dialect groups are distinguished for fifth-century classical Greek: Ionic-Attic, Aeolic, Arcado-Cyprian, Doric, and Northwest Greek; the latter two are sometimes classified together as West Greek. Later on, starting as early as the late fifth century but promoted especially by the unification of Greece under Macedonian rule, the local dialects gradually lost their distinctiveness and converged into the more homogeneous Common or 'Koine' Greek. Because of the cultural predominance of Attica and Ionia, the main ingredient of Koine Greek was Ionic-Attic, or more precisely, an Ionicised form of Attic. For someone trained to read Plato, it is therefore easy also to read the New Testament, but much more difficult to read Sappho and Pindar.

This dialectal variety, combined with a certain literary traditionalism, had a remarkable effect. While it seems natural for a poet or writer who 'invents' a new genre to use his or her own language and dialect (at least if his or her main audience speaks the same language and dialect), it is less natural for all later poets and writers who 'adopt' the new genre also to adopt the first poet's language and dialect—even if it is not theirs and their audience's. Yet, on the whole, this is what happened in the earlier phases of historical Greek literature (though not, for instance, in the prehistoric oral tradition of epic poetry). Thus Pindar, by birth a speaker of an Aeolic dialect, wrote his praise poetry in Doric because it belonged to the Doric tradition of lyric poetry, Tyrtaeus, a poet from Doric Sparta, wrote his war elegies in the Ionic dialect of earlier elegiac poets from Ionia such as Callinus, and even in prose, late fifth-century and early fourth-century Sicilian writers like Antiochus and Philistus, both of Doric-speaking Syracuse, chose for their Sicilian histories the Ionic dialect of Herodotus and the Attic dialect of Thucydides, respectively, in order to display their allegiance to a literary tradition. So, each genre or subgenre

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linguistic studies on Old Comedy are the Aristophanic index by Todd (1932) and the Aristophanic concordance by Dunbar and Marzullo (1973). Linguistic studies on the fragmentary authors are very rare: see, for example, Farioli (1996) on Cratinus, Sarati (1996) on Eupolis, and Rehrenböck (1987) on Pherecrates.

developed its linguistic identity within the framework of one particular dialect. Deviations from such a generic 'default dialect' were of course possible, but as a rule they had an aesthetic or ideological function (for instance, the Aeolic or epic-Ionic elements in the lyric of the Spartan Alcman, or the Doric and Ionic elements in the prose of the Athenian Xenophon).[2]

3. *Comedy and the Atticists*

The 'default dialect' for both tragedy and comedy is Attic Greek. The choral songs of tragedy show a slight Doricising patina, so as to pay homage to the Doric tradition of choral lyric, but apart from this and a few Ionicising elements in tragedy, the basic language of both genres is relatively pure. This was recognised by the ancient grammarians and lexicographers at a time when Koine Greek had replaced the earlier dialects but when educated people were still (or again) trying to write classical Attic. The so-called Atticists taught how to model one's style after that of a few exemplary authors: thus, if a given word was attested in a writer like Thucydides or Aristophanes, they would usually approve of it.

Obviously it could make a difference which writers were included in the canon of 'good' authors. Aristophanes seems to have made it even into the strictest lists, for instance into that of the Atticist lexicographer Phrynichus (second century CE). Other comic authors had less support, and their plays were therefore not transmitted for the sake of linguistic schooling. However, this explains only in part why we have eleven complete plays of Aristophanes and none of the other great authors of Old Comedy: at least Cratinus and Eupolis also belonged to the innermost circle of approved authors (cf. Quint. 10.1.65–66, some of whose selection criteria must have been stylistic ones).[3]

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[2] The best dialectological handbook for ancient Greek is still Thumb and Kieckers (1932) combined with Thumb and Scherer (1959). Buck (1955) contains some very useful tables, and Schmitt (1991), supplemented by Meier-Brügger (1992) for all aspects of Greek grammar, should be consulted for more recent bibliography. For Attic see in particular Risch (1964), and for its transformation into Koine Greek, López Eire (1991, 1993).

[3] For a short overview of the Atticist and Antiatticist lexicographical tradition see Cohn (1913, 693–695) and Dickey (2007, 96–99). Phrynichus' *Ecloga* has been reedited as the first volume of the series *Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker* (Fischer 1974, with further bibliography).

4. *Old Comedy and the 'Antiatticist'*

It is an interesting question whether Aristophanes' Attic was really so much 'better' or 'purer' than that of his colleagues. A definitive answer would help us to understand how 'demotic' his comedies were. If there were writers who wrote in a less pure dialect, it might be hypothesised that they copied more faithfully the language spoken in the streets of Athens, whose purity was constantly endangered by outside influences. Unfortunately, due to the fragmentary state of our evidence, a definitive answer cannot be given. However, we may try to get a rough idea by using a methodological shortcut.

In reaction to the strict views of Atticist forerunners of Phrynichus, another (anonymous) second-century author (the 'Antiatticist') produced a lexicon with the intention of proving that many of the words that had been banned by the Atticists *also* occurred in Attic writers of the classical period. Since much of the Antiatticist's material is drawn from both major and minor writers of Attic comedy, his lexicon is an important source for our knowledge of the comic lexicon outside the complete comedies of Aristophanes. The peculiar aim of the Antiatticist's work means that, from the viewpoint of the strict Atticists, the more an author is cited, the 'worse' is his language. Hence for each author we may divide the total number of fragments in *PCG* by the number of citations in the Antiatticist in order to establish a hierarchy of linguistic purity.

Such a procedure is of course not unproblematic. First, some of the Antiatticist's ascriptions may be wrong. Second, we do not know exactly how large the Antiatticist's corpus was and which works belonged to it. It may be that he had better access to the comedies of Cratinus or Aristophanes than to those of, for instance, Amipsias. The test proposed here must assume that all the other sources of comic fragments were facing similar problems and that the ratio between fragments cited exclusively because of a linguistic or grammatical point and fragments cited on other accounts is approximately the same in the case of every comedian. However, nearly all of the fragments of, say, Diocles, a minor poet of Old Comedy, belong to the grammatical group, and the same is true for most of the poets who are represented by a small number of fragments only. Thus the value of the comparison is related to the size of the respective corpora, and the figures for the better-known authors are not immediately comparable with those for the minor ones (though both groups should be more or less comparable among themselves).

Third, the Antiatticist was more interested in citing from Cratinus or Aristophanes exactly because these writers were not rejected by the strict Atticists. This is fortunate since it somewhat corrects the indication error just described. For if the Antiatticist preferred to cite the famous and better-known authors, it follows that the number of citations from these writers is disproportionately high in comparison with that from writers known mainly or exclusively from grammatical fragments. But despite this corrective, we must keep in mind how much all of the figures may depend on special circumstances. Even so, the fact that the ratio for well-known poets of Middle Comedy is much lower than that for well-known poets of Old Comedy implies that they are not totally misleading; we should expect exactly this situation since the Attic of the authors of Middle Comedy must have been closer to Koine Greek and therefore less 'pure':

	I	*II*	
Name	*Fragments*	*Citations in the Antiatticist*	*Ratio (col. I/col. II)*
Theopompus Com.	108	1	108.0
Pherecrates	288	4	72.0
Crates	60	1	60.0
Aristophanes (frr. only)	976	18	54.2
Cratinus	514	10	51.4
Philyllius	33	1	33.0
Eupolis	494	16	30.9
Strattis	91	3	30.3
Nicochares	28	1	28.0
Teleclides	73	3	24.3
Plato Comicus	301	14	21.5
Archippus	61	3	20.3
Amipsias	39	2	19.5
Phrynichus	93	5	18.6
Philonides	17	1	17.0
Eubulus (Middle Com.)	150	9	16.7
Hermippus	94	7	13.4
Antiphanes (Middle Com.)	327	25	13.1
Alexis (Middle Com.)	341	28	12.2
Chionides	8	1	8.0
Metagenes	20	3	6.7
Alcaeus	40	8	5.0
Aristagoras	5	1	5.0
Nicophon	30	6	5.0
Diocles	17	4	4.3
Cantharus	13	4	3.3
Aristonymus	8	3	2.7

The following writers of Old or early Middle Comedy are not cited by the Antiatticist (number of fragments in brackets): Callias (40), Aristomenes (16), Cephisodorus (14), Polyzelus (13), Sannyrio (13), Apollophanes (10), Lysippus (10), Epilycus (9), Magnes (8), Thugenides (7), Ecphantides (6), Demetrius I (5), Myrtilus (5), Autocrates (3), Eunicus (2), Euthycles (2), Poliochus (2), Hegemon (1), Leuco (1), Menecrates (1). This does not mean that their Attic was faultless, but probably their comedies were less accessible.[4]

5. *Pure Attic in the Writers of Old Comedy*

It is true that some entries in the Antiatticist's lexicon are surprising even if we take on a purist's point of view. For example, the use of a 1st sg. active ἤνεγκον in Ar. *Thesm*. 742 (as elsewhere in Aristophanes) is highlighted by the lexicographer (Antiatt. 98.12 Bekker)—as if ἤνεγκον were not the normal form in classical Attic (Soph. *El*. 13 ἤνεγκα being much more objectionable). Still, we notice (1) that most entries do exhibit irregular features (e.g., Antiatt. 88.24 Bekker διδοῦσιν for διδόασιν, ascribed by the manuscript to Aristophanes, but now regarded as Antiphanes fr. 154; Antiatt. 78.24 <Ar. fr. 353 adverbial ἀμεινόνως for ἄμεινον; Antiatt. 79.14–15 <Ar. *Pax* 259–282 passim non-Attic ἀλετρίβανος for δοῖδυξ, 'pestle'), and (2) that there is no citation from the famous Aristophanic passages in which barbarians are speaking 'Pidgin Greek'. It is therefore dangerous to ascribe 'ungrammatical' forms from unknown comedies to stylistic deviations of this kind (cf., e.g., Kock on Antiatt. 106.24 <Ar. fr. dub. 965 K. = Antiphanes fr. 33 K.–A. with λείψας for λιπών). Thus, at least some general conclusions can legitimately be drawn from the above statistics:

– Since the first rank of Theopompus is unreliable (he is cited only once and was perhaps not excerpted as thoroughly as many other authors), the best candidate for very pure Attic is Pherecrates. This agrees with ancient judgments on Pherecrates, who is called Ἀττικώτατος by Phrynichus and Athenaeus (Pherecrates *test*. 10; nevertheless, there is a considerable number of irregularities to be found in his fragments).

[4] For the dating and cultural environment of the 'Antiatticist' and his opponents, see Latte (1915) and Dickey (2007, 97–98).

– Similarly, the high position of Aristophanes (closely followed by Cratinus) is not surprising if we keep in mind Quintilian's judgment mentioned above (Ar. *test*. 65 = Cratin. *test*. 30 = Eupolis *test*. 26). Eupolis ranges further down, but still above most other comedians. We know hardly anything about writers like Alcaeus and Nicophon, but it is easy to believe that their language was of a different kind.
– Because of the large number of fragments, the works of Plato, Antiphanes, and Alexis are easily compared with those of Aristophanes, Cratinus, and Eupolis. That the Middle Comedians Antiphanes and Alexis appear much later in the list is not surprising, and their less well-represented colleague Eubulus figures in the same region of the hierarchy. The position of Plato between the Middle Comedians and the classical trias of Old Comedians is again confirmed indirectly: although most critics regard Plato as an author of Old Comedy, there is at least one *testimonium* that counts him unequivocally among the writers of Middle Comedy (Plato Com. *test*. 16).
– Strattis, Phrynichus, and Hermippus each have about ninety to ninety-five fragments. There is no independent judgment on Hermippus' style or grammar, but the fact that Phrynichus is placed much lower than Strattis accords well with (1) the 'excuse' of the grammarian Phrynichus for Strattis' exceptional use of the adjective γελάσιμος (Strattis fr. 83: Phrynichus would not have had to defend his rejection of this adjective if he had regarded Strattis as a 'bad' writer), and (2) the general contempt for the comedian Phrynichus' work, which seems to include its un-Attic linguistic appearance (cf. Ar. *Ran*. 12–15, with the scholion on 13 = Phryn. *test*. 8: κωμῳδεῖται δὲ ὡς ξένος, καὶ ἐπὶ φαυλότητι ποιημάτων δέ, ὡς ἀλλότρια λέγων καὶ ὡς κακόμετρα).

6. *Dialect and the Origins of Greek Comedy*

Because of the link between literary genres and particular dialects (see 2), one may wonder if the use of Attic as the 'default dialect' of Old Comedy implies anything about its connection with Doric comedy. If the same principle was valid as in, for instance, choral lyric, the absence of Doric elements would have to mean that Attic Old Comedy in the form of a plot drama could not have been taken over from Sicily, as Aristotle (*Poet*. 1449b5–9) states. However, even Aristotle does not say that comedy *as*

such is an imported phenomenon, and, more importantly, such a reasoning would not sufficiently take into account the popular character of the genre. Of course, most Athenians would have understood a play performed in Doric, but whereas the creation of some kind of perceptional distance could enhance the poetic effect of choral songs in tragedy or that of orally performed heroic epics, a similar *Verfremdung* would have been pointless in comedy. The comic poets did make use of dialectal or other linguistic divergences from 'proper' Attic, but their reason for doing so was not literary traditionalism (cf. 13).

7. *The Attic of Old Comedy I: Phonology*

Before the stylistic heterogeneity of Old Comedy can be assessed, it must be established in what respects the Attic default dialect of Old Comedy is similar to, or dissimilar from, the Attic dialect of tragedy, oratory, or historical prose. It is superfluous to give here a full description of Attic Greek, as this dialect has had a quasi-canonical status in the teaching of ancient Greek ever since the Renaissance. The following sketch rather concentrates on the *differentiae specificae*. Among the more-important phonological points are the following:

(1) Attic Greek generally retains original long *ᾱ only after ε, ι, ϱ; in all other positions *ᾱ was changed into η. Because of the Doric affiliation of choral lyric poetry, however, tragic lyrics do make use of long ᾱ where Attic does not have it. In comedy, in contrast, even lyric parts observe the proper Attic way with η, except in parodies and in very few highly solemn songs (e.g., Ar. *Nub*. 602 Ἀθάνα, *Pax* 1159 ἀχέτας, *Av*. 236 φωνᾷ, *Ran*. 242 ἁμέραισιν).

(2) In the original consonant groups *νϝ, *ϱϝ, *λϝ the *digamma* (ϝ) disappeared early. This loss was 'compensated' by the lengthening of the preceding vowel in Ionic, but not Attic, Greek. Hence, an original *ξένϝος, 'foreigner', became ξεῖνος (= /kse:nos/) in Ionic, but ξένος in Attic. In tragedy, both Ionic and Attic forms occur alongside each other (although the Attic ones are predominant and the Ionic ones are partly due to metrical needs). In comedy (except for parodic passages), only the Attic ones occur. A similar explanation holds for the use of both εἰς and ἐς (<*ἐνς) in tragedy, but only εἰς in non-parodic passages of comedy (contrast, e.g., Ar. fr. 570).

(3) Again, parody is indicated in the case of uncontracted vowel groups, as in μελέων: in Attic Greek even the groups εο and εω, which resist contraction in other dialects, are generally transformed into ου and ω, respectively (e.g., gen. sg. μέλους <μέλεος, gen. pl. μελῶν <μελέων). As with long ᾱ, a few non-parodic exceptions do occur in solemn lyrics (e.g., Ar. *Nub*. 278–279 βαρυαχέος, ὀρέων, *Thesm*. 993 ὄρεα).

(4) Original consonant groups such as *κy, *χy, or *τϝ developed into Attic ττ, whereas nearly all other Greek dialects show σσ. Interestingly, tragedy and early Attic prose avoid the Attic outcome, probably because it sounded too parochial. Comedy, however, being a popular literary genre, uses ττ throughout (as exemplified for instance by a series of verbs in Ar. fr. 282: πτίττω, βράττω, μάττω, πέττω), again excepting special conditions (parodic passages, passages in foreign dialects, quotations from and references to higher literature, foreign words, high-style songs: e.g., Ar. *Nub*. 567–568 θαλάσσης).

(5) The same avoidance of a particularly Attic phenomenon in high literature is seen with the consonant group ρσ, which generally became Attic ρρ, but which was retained in tragedy and early prose. Again, comedy is more popular and uses the Attic group ρρ (cf., e.g., Ar. fr. 222 ἀρρενικόν).

(6) The more mimetic approach of comedy as compared with tragedy is also indicated by the far-reaching observance of *correptio Attica* (i.e., the placement of the syllable boundary before, and not in between, consonant groups such as τρ, πλ, κν, etc.) in comedy.[5]

8. *The Attic of Old Comedy II: Morphology*

In the domain of morphology, the description of comic language is often complicated because of the coexistence of two or more alternative forms. Typically an older form is gradually replaced by a newer one, but during a certain lapse of time, both are present in the linguistic system. In such cases, some authors or genres are more conservative than others, that

[5] For more detail, examples, and a discussion of further points (ἐάν vs. ἤν, ἑαυτ-/σεαυτ- vs. αὑτ-/σαυτ-, ποιέω vs. ποέω, ξυν- vs. συν-, σφ-/σχ- vs. σπ-/σκ-, crasis, elision, prodelision, ν ephelkystikon, etc.), see Hoffmann, Debrunner, and Scherer (1969, 122–124), Hiersche (1970, 164–166), and the appendix in Willi (2003a). Statistics for the observance of *correptio Attica* can be found in Allen (1987, 109).

is, they prefer the older forms more consistently. Sometimes an author even uses morphological options that no longer belonged to the living language of his time. As in the case of phonological features borrowed from other dialects, we can then speak of a *Kunstsprache*. Again, the following discussion takes up only a few major morphological points:

(1) In the declension of *o*-stem lexemes, classical Attic has both -οις and -οισι as endings of the dative plural. The extreme rarity of -οισι in the Attic inscriptions of the late fifth century suggests that only -οις was a living form. In comedy, -οις is far more common than -οισι, but, especially (though not only) in lyric passages, -οισι also occurs. This shows that comic language is not simply a faithful reproduction of spoken Attic, but includes a few artificial elements (often as survivals of an earlier state of affairs). By the time of New Comedy, the forms in -οισι have virtually disappeared so that it is not even possible to explain them as 'metrically conditioned'. Synchronically, the situation with the dative plural of the *a*-stems is similar: again, -αις clearly predominates over -αισι throughout Old Comedy.

(2) Most case forms of comparatives in -(ί)ων (e.g., ἀμείνων, βελτίων) are based on a regular *n*-stem (e.g., gen. ἀμείνον-ος). A remnant of an older declension pattern is retained in the accusative singular masculine and feminine, the nominative and accusative plural neuter, and the nominative and accusative plural masculine and feminine. Here, forms in -(ί)ονα, -(ί)ονες, -(ί)ονας compete with the older *s*-stem forms -(ί)ω, -(ί)ους. In Aristophanes both types occur with a similar frequency (although the *n*-stem forms seem to have spread more quickly in the case of -(ί)ονα than with -(ί)ονες/-ας).

(3) Comedy makes extensive use of pronouns and pronominal adverbs reinforced with a so-called deictic -ί (e.g., ὁδί for ὅδε, ἐνθαδί for ἐνθάδε). The additional -ί is very uncommon in prose, tragedy, and official inscriptions, and it occurs more rarely in Attic oratory; presumably such forms belonged to a colloquial register. The coexistence is therefore due to sociolectal rather than diachronical factors.

(4) The situation with the first-person plural middle ending -μεσθα vs. -μεθα is comparable to that of the dative plural in -οισι vs. -οις. There is a fair number of -μεσθα occurrences in various contexts, especially in lyric passages, but it is clear that -μεθα was the only living form: -μεσθα

does not at all occur in Attic prose and oratory, and it is even likely that -μεσθα had never belonged to 'real-life' Attic. Like -οισι/-αισι, the artificial -μεσθα disappears in later comedy.

(5) Occasionally, statistics suggest that Aristophanes' preferences were not necessarily those of Old Comedy in general. Unfortunately, we are never able to affirm this with certainty because of the small total number of attestations for every single grammatical phenomenon in the fragments. For instance, some athematic verbs like ἵσταμαι and τίθεμαι have contracted as well as uncontracted imperatives (ἵστω vs. ἵστασο, τίθου vs. τίθεσο, etc.). In Aristophanes, as in Euripides but not in the other Old Comedians, the uncontracted forms are twice as frequent as the contracted ones. We may speculate whether Aristophanes had a special interest in morphological clarity, but the point must not be pressed. Similarly, it may be mere coincidence that there is a fragment of Cratinus (fr. 112) with the perfect form οἶσθας, or one of Pherecrates (fr. 152.9) with a thematised verb in -νύω, whereas Aristophanes uses the regular οἶσθα and, with one late exception (Ar. *Plut.* 719), -νυμι.

(6) Outside Aristophanes it is virtually impossible to decide if a particular comic writer used one form in his earlier years and another one in his later years—that is, if a diachronical change of his 'idiolect' took place. There must have been such developments, but even in Aristophanes they are rarely as clear-cut as, for instance, in the case of the coexistence of 1st sg. ipf. ἦν 'I was' vs. (older) ἦ: ἦν is metrically guaranteed only in Aristophanes' latest play, *Plutus*.

So, despite some uncertainties, it is clear that (at least Aristophanes') comic language was not an exact reproduction of 'real' spoken language: the plays do contain a certain amount of morphological conservatism or even artificiality.[6]

[6] The preceding examples are again selected from the more comprehensive treatment in the appendix of Willi (2003a). A detailed discussion of various morphological parallelisms in classical Greek drama is found in a series of articles by Lautensach (1896–1921). For a number of observations on older and newer forms in Aristophanes, see also the surveys by Anagnostopoulos (1925), Hoffmann, Debrunner, and Scherer (1969, 117–119), and López Eire (1986). On deictic -ί consult especially Martín de Lucas (1996) and Dover (1997, 63–64), on ἦ vs. ἦν E. Harrison (1942), and on the linguistic lateness of *Wealth* in general, Willi (2003b).

9. *The Attic of Old Comedy III: Syntax*

For a thorough syntactic analysis of Old Comedy, more than fragmentary material would be needed. The Aristophanic focus is even stronger in this grammatical field. Like his morphology, Aristophanes' syntax makes a somewhat conservative, though colloquial, impression. Most elements reproduce the actual spoken language of the day, but some may be vaguely artificial: not in the sense that they did not exist at all in spoken Attic, but in the sense that their distribution is likely to have been different. Consider the following two points:

(1) Final clauses are introduced in Attic Greek by the conjunctions ὅπως (ἄν), ὡς (ἄν), or ἵνα. From the distribution of these conjunctions in the orators, Plato, and the inscriptions, we know that ὡς (ἄν) was purely literary (or 'artificial'), that ὅπως (ἄν) was the traditional option, and that ἵνα became increasingly frequent over time, until it replaced ὅπως (ἄν) entirely. Even though ἵνα is by far the most common type in Aristophanes, the comic poet frequently uses the older ὅπως (ἄν) as well, and he even has some examples of the literary ὡς (ἄν), Since Aristophanes' contemporary Lysias, an orator with a most unpretentious style, avoids ὅπως (ἄν), it may be inferred that at least the number of occurrences of ὅπως (ἄν) in Aristophanic comedy is too high for true linguistic realism.

(2) A similar argument holds for the great frequency of ὡς beside ὅτι to introduce substantive clauses (e.g., λέγω ὅτι vs. λέγω ὡς): in Lysias ὅτι is far more common than ὡς but ὡς predominates in Aristophanes.

It is more difficult to ascertain whether the general retention of the oblique optative in Aristophanes (but not in New Comedy)—which does not in the least foreshadow the elimination of the optative in later Greek—or the Aristophanic predominance of the possessive syntagma ὁ ἐμὸς πατήρ over the ultimately more successful ὁ πατήρ μου also reproduce the linguistic realities of fifth-century Attic in a slightly distorted way.

Sometimes the comic frequency or infrequency of a phenomenon is more easily interpreted as a question of register rather than diachrony, even though the two may overlap:

(3) Apart from the singular and the plural, ancient Greek—like other Indo-European languages—also had a dual number. Following related

dialects of the Ionic area, Attic Greek gradually lost the dual during the fifth and fourth centuries. By the late fifth century, the dual seems to have been regarded as provincial and somewhat uncouth, and the historian Thucydides consciously avoided it. Even in Plato's dialogues, the dual is found only in about 25 percent of all contexts in which it could have been used. The corresponding figure for Aristophanic comedy is much higher, well above 50 percent. Since there are occasional (but rare) attestations of dual forms even in Middle and New Comedy, it appears that the dual survived longest and strongest in colloquial Attic.

(4) Conversely, an innovative feature of colloquial and comic Attic is the quick spread of the perfect tense of transitive verbs, which encroaches on the domain of the old aorist (and which is then commonly referred to as the 'resultative perfect'). The new perfect forms are clearly more common in Aristophanes than in Thucydides, the tragedians, or even Plato's dialogues.

(5) Syntactic colloquialisms can be detected in many further areas. Thus, parataxis is far more frequent in comedy than in higher literary genres (obviously because spoken language avoids more-complicated hypotactic structures), and certain particles or function words are exceedingly common because of the oral stylisation of comic language. One example is the quasi-prepositional adverb εὐθύ + gen. '(straight) to', which occurs fifteen times in comedy and only ten times elsewhere in all the rest of classical Attic literature. Note, however, that particles are less frequent in comedy than in the Platonic dialogues: perhaps higher oral registers were even more fond of them than were lower ones.[7]

[7] The appendix in Willi (2003a) also contains a section on syntax. For detailed statistics on the use of final conjunctions, see Weber (1884–1885) and for a discussion of semantic nuances Amiguès (1977). Various other subordinating conjunctions are statistically and stylistically analysed in Sobolewski (1891) and Monteil (1963). On the dual see especially Hasse (1891), Cuny (1906), Humpers (1922), Poultney (1963, 363–367), and more recently (in a general handbook on the Greek verb) Duhoux (2000, 131–134), on the 'resultative perfect' Chantraine (1927) and Willi (2003a, 126–133), on parataxis Trenkner (1960), and on particles and colloquialism—apart from the reference work by Denniston (1950)–López Eire (1996, 119–133), Duhoux (1997), and for εὐθύ, Richards (1901).

10. *Comic Word Formation*

Several aspects of word formation are characteristic of (Old) Comedy: (1) a great frequency of diminutives, (2) a comically exaggerated extension of certain productive derivational patterns, (3) the use of some colloquial formation types that are less common in other genres, (4) the creation of multiple compounds, and (5) the invention of comic names.

(1) The function of diminutives is threefold: (a) 'diminutive' in the strict sense ({CHILD} vs. {SMALL CHILD}), (b) 'deteriorative' ({CHILD} vs. {BAD CHILD}), and (c) 'hypocoristic' ({CHILD} vs. {DEAR/NICE CHILD}). The most common suffixes -ιον, -ίδιον, and -ισκο- fulfil all of these roles. Others are usually restricted to one or two of them: -άριον is deteriorative or diminutive, -ύλλιον hypocoristic and deteriorative, and -ύδριον mostly deteriorative (cf., e.g., Ar. *Ach*. 398 ἐπύλλιον, 517 ἀνδράριον, *Eq*. 907 ἑλκύδριον, *Pax* 201 σκευάριον, *Ran*. 89 μειρακύλλιον, *Eccl*. 883 μελύδριον). In colloquial language, diminutive suffixes quickly lose their full value and then tend to be replaced or reinforced. This leads to the creation of suffix conglomerates such as -ισκιον (= -ισκο- + -ιον), -αρίδιον (= -άριον + -ίδιον), -ιδάριον (= -ίδιον + -άριον).

In classical literature, such conglomerates are mainly comic (e.g., Ar. *Ach*. 459 κοτυλίσκιον, *Pax* 1002 χλανισκίδιον, fr. 83 βοιδάριον, fr. 249 θυλακίσκιον, fr. 795 βιβλιδάριον). A passage of Aristophanes' *Babylonians* made fun of the excessive use of diminutives (Ar. fr. 92). Deteriorative and hypocoristic diminutives were also formed from personal names, often for comic effect (Ar. *Eq*. 823 Δημακίδιον, *Lys*. 872 Μυρρινίδιον, Ar. fr. 788 Ἀφροδιτίδιον, Epich. fr. 234 Πριαμιλλύδριον, Pl. Com. fr. 208 Ἀφροδιταρίδιον).

(2) Verbal nouns in -σις (and to a lesser degree in -μα) as well as adjectives in -ικός and verbal compounds in -έω (cf. Ar. *Thesm*. 54–56, *Plut*. 162–167, 513–514) belonged to the most productive formative types in fifth-century and fourth-century Attic.

Both -σις and -ικός were particularly prominent in administrative and classifying texts; their increase is therefore directly related to the emergence of technical, social, and intellectual specialisation. For instance, juridical terms such as κλῆσις are ridiculed by the formation of words like γυναίκισις for the comic 'crime' of impersonating a woman (Ar. *Thesm*. 863). Aristophanes also mocks the creation of new rhetorical

terms in a sophistic environment (Ar. *Nub*. 317–318: διάλεξις, περίλεξις, κροῦσις; cf. *Nub*. 764 ἀφάνισις, 874–875 ἀπόφευξις, κλῆσις, χαύνωσις).

Nouns in -μα are often associated with tragic bombast because tragedy employed them instead of more common words (e.g., πόλισμα for πόλις; similarly, but more rarely, nouns in -σις: cf. Ar. *Ach*. 426 πέπλωμα, 432 ῥάκωμα, *Eq*. 315 χόρδευμα, *Nub*. 166 διεντέρευμα, *Thesm*. 147 ἄλγησις). Moreover, they are applied to persons, mostly as terms of abuse (Ar. *Nub*. 260 τρῖμμα, *Ran*. 92 στώμυλμα).

From Ar. *Eq*. 1375–1381 and certain passages in *Wasps* and *Clouds*, it appears that the formation of adjectives in -ικός was fashionable among young intellectuals with a sophistic training: often these words are simple alternatives for more traditional synonyms (e.g., μνημονικός vs. μνήμων; cf. especially Ar. *Vesp*. 1197–1200, *Nub*. 482–484, 727–730).

(3) Formation types that are well represented in comic literature but rare in other genres presumably had a colloquial flavour. Although some may have been extended ad hoc to create humorous neologisms (as happened elsewhere for instance with the old-fashioned abstract nouns in -σύνη, which were given new life with the creation of a vulgar καταπυγοσύνη: Cratin. fr. 58, Ar. *Nub*. 1023, Ar. fr. 130), this is not certain in the majority of cases. One may cite, for instance, the following:

- onomatopoetic verbs in -ύζω, -ίζω, and -άζω (Ar. *Ach*. 683 τονθορύζω, *Lys*. 761 κικκαβάζω, *Eccl*. 849 καχάζω, *Eccl*. 31, Cratin. fr. 344, Pl. Com. fr. 231 κοκκύζω, Ar. *Plut*. 732, Timocles fr. 23.7 ποππύζω, Ar. fr. 234 ὀτοτύζω, Ar. fr. 514, Cratin. fr. 220, Eubulus fr. 108 παφλάζω, Cratin. fr. 56 πυππάζω, Hermippus fr. 23 ῥύζω),
- quasi-diminutive verbs in -ύττω and -ύλλω (e.g., Ar. *Ach*. 657 ἐξαπατύλλω for ἐξαπατάω, *Eq*. 224 βδύλλω, *Av*. 3 πλανύττω, *Thesm*. 852 κοικύλλω, fr. com. adesp. 759 μοιμύλλω; cf. Ar. *Ran*. 516, Pherecrates fr. 113.29 ἡβυλλιάω),
- desiderative verbs in -σείω and 'sickness' verbs in -(ι)άω (Ar. *Eq*. 888 χεσείω, *Vesp*. 168 δρασείω; *Eq*. 61 σιβυλλιάω, *Nub*. 183 μαθητιάω, *Vesp*. 807 οὐρητίαω, *Lys*. 715 and Pl. Com. fr. 188.21 βινητιάω, Callias fr. 35 ἑλλεβοριάω, Ar. fr. 839 and Pherecrates fr. 35 κουριάω, Eupolis fr. 467 μαστιγιάω, Eubulides fr. 1 σοφιστιάω, Pherecrates fr. dub. 288 στρατηγιάω, Theopompus Com. fr. 46 ὠνητιάω),

- deteriorative comparatives and superlatives in -ίστερος/-ίστατος (Ar. *Ach*. 425 πτωχίστερος, *Vesp*. 923 μονοφαγίστατος, *Pax* 662 μισοπορπακίστατος, *Ran*. 91 and Ar. fr. 684 λαλίστερος, Ar. fr. 920 ψευδίστατος, Pl. Com. fr. 58 ἁρπαγίστατος, Pl. Com. fr. 219 γαστρίστερος, Pherecrates fr. 102 κακηγορίστερος),
- (often abusive) nouns in -αξ (whose popular origin is indicated by the presence of non-Attic long *ā) (Ar. *Ach*. 89, *Ran*. 909 φέναξ, *Vesp*. 673 σύρφαξ, also used as a title by Plato Com., Ar. fr. 716 στύππαξ, Ar. fr. 922 ψίλαξ, Cratinus fr. 416 ἀρράβαξ, Eupolis fr. 172.9 πλούταξ, Nicophon fr. 18 νέαξ, fr. com. adesp. 82 μώμαξ, fr. com. adesp. 803 φόρταξ), or
- 'baby words' of various kinds (Ar. *Nub*. 1382 βρῦν, 1383 μαμμάω, *Vesp*. 609 παππίζω, *Pax* 120, 128 πάππας, παππίας; cf. Ar. fr. 883).

A large number of interjections (e.g., βομβάξ, εὐρὰξ πατάξ, ἰοῦ, αἰβοῖ) and some intensifying prefixes (λα-, βου-: Ar. *Ach*. 664, Eupolis fr. 436 and 437, fr. com. adesp. 513) also belong to the colloquial layer of word formation.

(4) Compounds appear in comedy in various shapes and functions. Nominal compounds often carry a heightened affective intensity and are therefore ideally suited for invective purposes. On the literary level, there is a direct line of development from early iambus to the abusive mode of comedy, but many abusive compounds must also have belonged to the nonliterary colloquial stratum of everyday Attic (e.g., εὐρύπρωκτος). Still, certain more peculiar compound types, like those with the semi-onomastic suffix -ίδης/-άδης, illustrate the literary continuity (cf., e.g., Archilochus fr. 250 W. συκοτραγίδης, Ar. *Ach*. 595, Eupolis 248 σπουδαρχίδης, Ar. *Ach*. 597 μισθαρχίδης, *Ran*. 841–842 στωμυλιοσυλλεκτάδης, ῥακίοσυρραπτάδης; the suffix is also used for comic simplex nouns, as in Aristophanes' title Γηρυτάδης, Ar. *Ach*. 596 στρατωνίδης, Pherecrates 252 κλεπτίδης). The application of well-known serious (especially epic) compounds to new comic contexts creates a clash of styles (e.g., Eupolis fr. 174: women, not cows, are εἰλίποδες, Crates fr. 32 καρκίνοι ποδάνεμοι). A similar effect is reached by the replacement of one element in a traditional compound (Ar. *Av*. 1695–1696 ἐγγλωττογάστωρ after ἐγχειρογάστωρ, Pl. Com. fr. 132 ἑλκετρίβων after Homeric ἑλκεχίτων).

Most famous among comic compounds are the polysyntheta, compounds made up from more than two autosemantic elements. The extreme case is that of Ar. *Eccl*. 1169–1175 (λοπαδοτεμαχοσελαχογαλεοκρανιολειψανοδριμυποτριμματοσιλφιολιπαρομελιτοκατακεχυμενοκιχλεπικοσσυφοφαττοπεριστεραλεκτρυονοπτοπιφαλλιδοκιγκλοπελειολαγῳοσιραιοβαφητραγανοπτερυγών: some kind of pastry), but the fragments of other poets also contain a few examples. However, unlike the *Ecclesiazusae* word, these multiple compounds mostly consist of not more than two elements on the same level (e.g., Ar. fr. 347 τρυγῳδοποιομουσική <τρυγῳδοποιός + μουσική, Cratin. fr. 223 νεοπλουτοπόνηροι <νεόπλουτος + πονηρός, Eupolis fr. 190 ταγηνοκνισοθήρας, Eupolis fr. 424, Philyllius fr. 16). If these are left aside, 'true' polysyntheta occur almost exclusively in the plays of Aristophanes (e.g., Ar. *Ach*. 390, *Eq*. 89, *Nub*. 332, 1004, *Vesp*. 220, 505, *Av*. 491, *Lys*. 457–458; cf. at least Pherecrates fr. 137 λειριοπολφανεμώνη, later Ephippus fr. 14). Outside comedy, they typically belong to the high-flown—often meaningless (cf. fr. com. adesp. 843)—style of dithyrambic poetry, which is laughed at on stage (cf., e.g., Ar. *Av*. 1372–1409 and various fragments of Middle Comedy such as Antiphanes fr. 207). In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, too, some multiple compounds are designed to make fun of Aeschylus' style (Ar. *Ran*. 839, 841–842, 963, 966).

The fragments of Middle Comedy suggest that comic compounding eventually disappeared. Instead, long asyndetic lists, especially of consumption goods, gained in importance. Such lists are occasionally found in Old Comedy too—probably as virtuoso pieces for pronunciation speed—but they rarely have the same prominence (e.g., Ar. fr. 332, 333, 428, 430, 431, Cratinus fr. 105, Eupolis fr. 13, 218). The Aristophanic mega-compound from *Ecclesiazusae* exemplifies the transition: it still belongs to the verbal tradition of Old Comedy, but its subject theme and its list character foreshadow later comic style.

(5) Comic names fall into several different categories. There are real names that are more or less subtly modified to make them sound comic. In Ar. *Vesp*. 592, Κλεώνυμος becomes Κολακώνυμος, and in Hermippus fr. 39, Ἱεροκλείδης becomes Κολακοφοροκλείδης (or Κορακοφοροκλείδης) (similarly Cratinus fr. 281). More frequently, entire names are invented, usually as speaking names. Πραξαγόρα in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* is the one who is active (πράττω) in the (men's) domain of the ἀγορά, and Πεισέταιρος in Aristophanes' *Birds* is the 'sophistic' orator who is able to convince (πείθω) his ἑταῖροι. Unlike the modified

names of the first type, most of these speaking names conform to established naming patterns: they sound like real names even if they are not attested outside comedy. Since full Athenian personal names also included a patronym ('ὁ τοῦ X') and a demotic ('from the deme Y'), comic fantasy had a free range (cf., e.g., Ar. *Ran*. 428–429 Καλλίας ὁ Ἱπποβίνου for Ἱππονίκου; Ar. *Av*. 1126 Κομπασεύς, Eupolis fr. 195 Ὀνοκίνδιος; Hermippus fr. 43 Τεῦρεύς). The invention of geographic names is less common (e.g., Ar. *Ran*. 186–187).[8]

11. *Lexical Colloquialism*

The distinctly colloquial stratum of the comic lexicon is visible not only in the widespread use of diminutives and some of the formational classes mentioned in 10. It also manifests itself in various colourful metaphors (e.g., Ar. fr. 633 μέλι ἐστίν for 'it's great'; cf. colloquial German *das ist Zucker!*), in the free application of obscene words, in the frequency of oaths, and in the preference for drastic expressions, especially in the case of common semantic concepts such as 'to go', 'to eat', 'to drink', 'to say', and so on. Thus ἔρρω and its compounds occur instead of εἶμι and ἔρχομαι (e.g., Pherecrates fr. 95), λέπω, κάπτω, τρώγω, and βρύχω instead of ἐσθίω (Ar. fr. 314 and fr. 520, Eupolis fr. 335 and fr. 465, Strattis fr. 12, Theopompus fr. 6), ἕλκω and (κατα-/ἀπο-)βροχθίζω instead of (κατα-)πίνω (Ar. fr. 246, Hermippus fr. 46, Strattis fr. 23), and γρύζω instead of λέγω (cf. Pherecrates fr. 168).[9]

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[8] The handbooks of Greek word formation by Debrunner (1917) and Chantraine (1933) include the most important observations on comic usage, but for a more detailed treatment see the studies by Uckermann (1879) and Peppler (1902–1921). On the 'sophistic' formations in -σις and -ικός see, for example, Peppler (1910), Handley (1953b), Dover (1970, 13), and Willi (2003a, 134–136 and 139–145, also 122–126 on compound verbs in -έω). On diminutives, see especially Petersen (1910) and F. Schmid (1945), on onomatopoetic verbs, Tichy (1983), on nouns in -αξ, Björck (1950, 260–268), on baby words, M.L. West (1970), Stephanopoulos (1983), and Golden (1995), on interjections, Schinck (1873), Dittmar (1933, 8–17), and Labiano Ilundain (2000). Comic compounding is treated concisely in Meyer (1923, 119–132) and more discursively in Ramalho (1952), the comic function of accumulation in lists (cf. Spyropoulos 1973) and compounds in Silk (2000a, 126–136). A programmatic discussion of speaking names is found in Marzullo (1953); for naming conventions, see S.D. Olson (1992).

[9] For the colloquial ingredient in the language of comedy, see especially López Eire (1996), after Lottich (1881), Setti (1885), and Bachmann (1961), Werres (1936), Pfeiffner (1931), and Dillon (1995) on oaths, and A. Müller (1913) on terms of abuse. Henderson (1991a) provides a full treatment of comic obscenity, including the social and literary perspective; see also Dover (2002).

12. *Foreign Words*

The everyday character of comic vocabulary explains why foreign words appear in comedy more often than in other genres. Generally speaking, classical Greek was not very receptive to (new) foreign elements in its vocabulary. However, there were no Greek words for many goods imported from other countries, and loanwords were therefore relatively common as designations for foreign items of fashion and cuisine (spices). Since such things are more likely to be mentioned in comedy than in oratory or historiography, the occurrence of most loanwords in comic language is not surprising (examples for items of fashion: Ar. fr. 355 βαυκίδες, Ar. fr. 791 βάμβαλος, Cratinus fr. 32 καλάσιρις; perfume: Ar. fr. 213 ψάγδας, Ar. fr. 336 βάκκαρις; spice: Pherecrates fr. 195, Theopompus fr. 18 ἀβυρτάκη). A more remarkable phenomenon would be the use of foreign words to give an utterance a solemn or even hieratic ring, as *might* be the case with Phrygian (?) βέδυ 'water' (possibly derived from the Indo-European etymon of ὕδωρ and English *water*) in Philyllius fr. 19, and perhaps also with ζάψ 'sea' (?), of unknown origin, in Cratinus Iunior fr. 13—but note that both βέδυ and ζάψ were widely known from so-called χαλινός writing exercises. In the fourth century, Nicostratus fr. 36 also has 'Cilician' ζιγγοῦν for Greek ὑποπίνειν, but this may represent a word taken over first into Cilician *Greek*, and then cited by the comic poet as an example of an epichoric dialect phenomenon (cf. further Eupolis fr. 390).[10]

13. *Foreign Dialects, Sociolects, and Linguistic Characterisation*

The staging of characters who speak a dialect other than Attic is one of the best-known cases of linguistic variation in Old Comedy. The technique corresponds to the wish for dramatic realism. In the artificial world of tragedy, it was acceptable to have a foreigner express himself in perfect Attic. In comedy, however, not least because of its ethnic stereotypes, a Megarian speaking Attic would have looked as weird as an intelligent Boeotian or a cowardly Spartan. To some degree this is paradoxical since elsewhere Old Comedy neglects all considerations of linguistic plausibility (as has been demonstrated, for instance, with regard to comic forms of address). The lack of continuous linguistic characterisation in

[10] The discussion of foreign words in comedy by Wüst (1906) is short and difficult to access; a new treatment would be worthwhile. For βέδυ and ζάψ as used in writing exercises, see now Wachter (2004, 64–66).

Aristophanic (but not Menandrean) comedy was already pointed out, and criticised, by Plutarch (*Mor*. 853c–d), and modern scholars have stressed that most major characters freely switch between one style of diction and another: even a simple man like Dicaeopolis in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* can utter a paratragic speech. At best, two characters are linguistically opposed to each other, but even then the opposition is not very clear-cut, and the differences lie rather in what they say and talk about than in how they do it. Occasionally, it is possible to discover sociolectal differentiation, but this does not mean that the representation of a sociolect is not disrupted. A case in point is women's speech in Aristophanes. Women swear by other divinities than men; they show a more supportive, polite, and respectful conversation style (with hedging pronouns, compliments, and carefully chosen forms of address); they make less use of obscenities; and they sometimes seem to be pictured as using a more innovative speech variety (especially with regard to some lexical and syntactic features)—but these are tendencies rather than rules and do not hold true in all situations and for all characters.

Speakers from outside Attica, in contrast, consistently speak their own Greek dialects: they never 'fall back' into Attic. Moreover, foreign dialects are reproduced quite faithfully, even though of course not every comic writer needs to have been able to imitate equally well all dialects. There is no obvious reason why Aristophanes, apparently, was better at representing Laconian and Megarian than Boeotian.

Hearing a foreign dialect on stage is funny, but it would be wrong to think that the primary function of dialect passages is to deride the non-Athenian. Such an explanation is more plausible for 'foreigner-talk' passages, where a non-native speaker of Greek is shown using broken language (cf. for instance the Scythian in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*). Here too, several foreign accents seem to have been distinguished no less than French or Italian accents are nowadays distinguished on the English stage (contrast, e.g., the 'Persian' and the 'Scythian' treatment of the *tenues aspiratae* θ, φ, χ in Ar. *Ach*. 104 vs. *Thesm*. 1001–1225). No doubt a Persian and a Scythian accent were associated with different sets of ethnic stereotypes.

Even if 'realism' is regarded as the main reason for having foreigners speak in their peculiar dialects or accents, these linguistic varieties are sometimes used for precise dramatic aims. Aristophanes' use of the Megarian dialect in *Acharnians*, for example, may have suggested to the audience that the whole scene with the father selling his daughters as pigs should be identified and 'read' as a parody of a Megarian farce (on which

cf. Ecphantides fr. 3). In the case of fragmentary plays, similar interpretations are difficult to advance, but there is enough evidence to show that Aristophanes was not the only writer of Old Comedy to employ this kind of linguistic variation. The relevant fragments from Aristophanes' major rivals are cited in the second part of this chapter (see further Amipsias fr. 17, perhaps with a fake doctor speaking Ionic, Apollophanes fr. 7, Epilycus fr. 4, Eubulus fr. 11, Philyllius fr. 10, Teleclides fr. 53 and fr. 63, fr. com. adesp. 182, 329, 389, 914, 1035; the staging of a foreigner is not always certain: cf. the surprising Ionic forms in fr. com. adesp. 1110.18–19).

In comparison with all this, it is much rarer that foreign languages—rather than dialects—are represented on stage (in the comic fragments cf. only fr. com. adesp. 57). This has to do with the inability of the average Greek to speak or understand other languages. Hence, such lines could be introduced only when it did not matter what their real meaning was. Even where we know something about the language in question (as in the case of the Persian in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, but not in that of the Triballian in *Birds*), it is disputed whether we should regard the words found in the text as more than invented gibberish.[11]

14. *Literary Parody*

No discussion of the language of Old Comedy would be complete without some remarks on the parody of different registers, that is, linguistic varieties that belong to a certain text genre. In Aristophanes the parody of tragic language ('paratragedy') plays a major role. We do not know to what extent this preference was typical of Old Comedy in general. Even the apparent importance of epic parody in Cratinus need not imply that paratragedy was less prominent there.

[11] The excellent study by Colvin (1999) (cf. also Colvin 2000; Kloss 2001, 34–54) is now the standard reference work—with earlier bibliography—for all questions regarding foreign dialects in Greek comedy (cf. also Halliwell 1990); Colvin deals with both sociolinguistic and dialectological issues. For a sociolinguistic discussion of comic 'foreigner talk', see Friedrich (1918), Brixhe (1988), and Willi (2003a, 198–225), and for a literary interpretation of the use of Laconian in *Lysistrata*, Willi (2002b, 132–141). Willi (2003a, 157–197) also includes a chapter on women's speech in Aristophanes, building up on the work of Sommerstein (1995) and McClure (1999); see now also Duhoux (2004). The classic treatment of linguistic characterisation in Old (Aristophanic) Comedy is Dover (1976); in addition, consult now Del Corno (1997) and Silk (2000a, 207–255). Dickey (1995) shows that Old Comedy is much less realistic than New Comedy in the use of forms of address.

The parody of formal features has a direct bearing on the linguistic shape of comedy. With paratragedy, para-epic, para-dithyramb (e.g., Ar. *Nub*. 335–338, *Av*. 1372–1409), and so on, comedy appropriates modes of expression that are characteristic of, and closely associated with, 'serious' literary genres. These modes of expression can be understood as peculiar sets of features that depart from the comic 'norm' (as defined by the stylistically unmarked passages and described in sections 7–12). However, the comic poet not only copies the language of tragedy, epic, or dithyramb: he often also selects what he takes to be the most specific formal constituents of these genres and exaggerates them so as to enlarge the gulf between the comic mode and the mode of the parodied genre. The result is a clash of styles, which in itself is one of the crucial ingredients of humorous expression. The pleasure for the audience results from the recognition of the underlying genre and its linguistic laws. Since this recognition is far more demanding than the enjoyment of puns based on simple assonances—the other most common linguistic device to create humour in Old Comedy—stylistic parody can be regarded as the highest form of comic verbal art.

Linguistic parody operates on the basis of the most typical characteristics of each parodied genre. A detailed description of its features would therefore closely approximate an outline of the linguistic appearance of the parodied genre itself. It is tautological to note that paratragedy reproduces tragic features like the formulation of virtually meaningless stichomythic questions, the omission of definite articles, the use of poetic words (e.g., τοῖος for τοιοῦτος), often in the poetic plural (e.g., δώματα, μέλαθρα), or the creation of 'superfluous' parallel lexemes (e.g., πέπλωμα for πέπλος: cf. 10). More importantly, these tragic ingredients are interwoven with prosaic or even vulgar elements that are not found in tragedy, and they are applied to, and confronted with, banal topics that are excluded from the tragic world. Even so, it might be a rewarding, though huge, task to write a grammar of paratragedy (and para-epic, para-dithyramb, etc.), to compare this with a grammar of tragedy (epic, dithyramb, etc.), and to establish in what respects the parody and its subtexts overlap and diverge.

A slightly different parodic technique consists in the combination of literal quotations, so as to create comic patchworks either without thematic coherence or with reference to an entirely new context. Here the comic poet adds less of his own incongruent material (cf., e.g., Ar. *Av*. 904–953, *Ran*. 1264–1277). Such passages do of course contrast with their environment, but the clash of styles is less crucial than the clash

of meanings within the parodic piece. Often elements of both parodic techniques are combined (e.g., Ar. *Ran*. 1309–1322).

Despite the importance of literary parody in Old Comedy, it would be wrong to identify *every* tragic or epic element in comedy as parodic. The main exceptions are, on the one hand, occasional tragic and lyric elements in comic lyrics (cf. 7 on various non-Attic phonological features in solemn songs) and, on the other hand, 'epic' or hexametric elements at the end of anapaestic lines (where the rhythm is identical with that of a hexameter: e.g., Ar. *Nub*. 968 παρέδωκαν for παρέδοσαν, *Vesp*. 615 βελέων ἀλεωρήν, *Vesp*. 662 κατένασθεν for -θησαν).[12]

15. *Parody of Other Styles and Registers*

Many nonliterary text genres are parodied in Old Comedy as well. Typically these are genres with a distinctive linguistic appearance and with an established place in everyday life. In particular there are prayers (e.g., Ar. *Eq*. 763–768, *Vesp*. 875–884, *Pax* 435–453), hymns (e.g., Ar. *Eq*. 551–564, *Nub*. 563–574), oracles (Ar. *Eq*. 960–1099 passim, Cratinus iunior fr. 8), oaths (Callias fr. 10, Teleclides fr. 29), and all kinds of 'official and public texts' such as laws and decrees (Ar. *Av*. 1035–1036, 1040–1042, 1049–1050), treaties (Archippus fr. 27: between the Athenians and the fishes), and assembly speeches (Ar. *Eccl*. 171–240, cf. Archippus fr. 30). Even religious genres like prayers and hymns can boldly be laughed at (for instance with puns like fr. com. adesp. 83 ὦ Βδεῦ δέσποτα for ὦ Ζεῦ δέσποτα: cf. βδέω 'to fart'). When the underlying texts are lost (or had never been written down), it is difficult to judge where the parodic transformation starts, but because the most essential textual features are retained, the parodic imitation sometimes allows us to reconstruct parts of the original.

The parody of linguistic registers should not be confounded with that of technical terminology. For the latter there is little, if any, evidence in the Aristophanic comedies, where it would be easy to detect: technical terms in the strict sense are only those words that are not commonly used or understood and that therefore either need a contextual explanation or a setting where their meaning is irrelevant (for instance because they are

[12] The in-depth study of Aristophanic paratragedy by Rau (1967) includes a wealth of linguistic observations (though not systematically arranged); for other literary parody cf. also Kronauer (1954, 37–51) and Zimmermann (1997). The technique of discontinuity, mobility, or stylistic clashes is described by Silk (2000a, 98–159).

used in order to present a character as a specialist expressing himself with obscure words; but even the vocabulary of the geometer Meton in *Birds*, Ar. *Av*. 999–1009, is plain enough, although the *meaning* of his utterance is obscure).[13]

16. *Metaphors and Imagery*

There is one further area where the linguistic and the literary dimensions of Old Comedy are interrelated. At least in Aristophanes' language, imagery is of crucial poetic importance. For the linguist, the essential (and difficult) question is to decide where the poet is drawing on a pre-existing image and where he is creating a new one, either from nothing or by transforming an existing one. From a literary perspective, the use of images (including metaphors, allegories, and personifications) is most remarkable when they are taken literally and staged accordingly. Since Aristophanes likes to do this (cf., e.g., the scene in *Birds* where people are literally winged: *Av*. 1304–1469), the phenomenon has been called *figura Aristophanica*, but other poets may have had similar ideas; personifications, at least, are attested for various other plays such as Cratinus' *Pytine* 'Flask', in which Comedy was the poet's wife.[14]

II. *Individual Authors*

1. *Aristophanes*

For reasons of space, the following survey concentrates on the Aristophanic fragments. The linguistically interesting material in the complete plays is well known and easily accessible through the secondary literature cited in the first part.

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[13] For the distinction between technical languages and linguistic registers with regard to Old Comedy, see Willi (2003a, 8–95), with a paradigmatic treatment of prayer and hymn language on the one hand and legal, medical (cf. Miller 1945; Byl 1990), and literary (cf. Denniston 1927) terminology on the other (cf. also Camacho Maxia 1996). On prayer and hymn parody, consult also Dieterich (1893), Adami (1901), Kleinknecht (1937), and Horn (1970), on parodies of public speeches and ceremonies, Burckhardt (1924) and Haldane (1965), on oracles, Muecke (1998) and Kloss (2001, 70–89).

[14] Taillardat (1965) is an exhaustive reference book for the imagery of Aristophanes and Old Comedy in general; it discusses possible criteria for the individuation of original imagery. On Aristophanic metaphor and allegory, see especially Newiger (1957), but also Komornicka (1964) and Bonanno (1987).

Together with Eupolis and Cratinus, Aristophanes belongs to the great trias of Old Comedy with their *sincera sermonis Attici gratia* (Quint. 10.1.65 = *test*. 65). Ancient scholars did not always agree on Aristophanes' Athenian origin (cf. *test*. 1, 2, 3, 9–12, with guesses reaching from Rhodos, Aegina, up to Egypt), but his language is unobjectionable Attic, and he was an Athenian citizen. For the purist Phrynichus, Aristophanes was the comic poet whose Attic came closest to an ideal state (*test*. 69; cf. *test*. 88–90), and we may be justified in identifying Aristophanes' dialect with the διάλεκτος μέση πόλεως, which the speaker of fr. 706 claims for himself—as opposed to an over-refined, effeminate style and an uncultivated, boorish other extreme (whose uncouth outspokenness is referred to also in fr. dub. 927).

On a different level, Plutarch complained about the predominance of verbal comedy and the lack of consistency in Aristophanes' technique of linguistic characterisation (*test*. 68; cf. *test* 92). However, this judgment is based on the comparison with Menander and therefore does not criticise the individual Aristophanes, but the genre Old Comedy as opposed to New Comedy: doubtless Cratinus would not have fared any better. Moreover, what Plutarch presents as a shortcoming is one of the linguistic merits of Aristophanes: his gift for puns and comic twists of style and register, which makes him, in Cicero's words, the *facetissimus poeta veteris comoediae* (*test*. 58). Applied to the dramaturgical component of comedy, Plutarch's statement could even be misleading: there are Aristophanic passages in which a truly mimetic performance with differences of voice according to character is not just feasible but actually demanded by the script (cf. *test*. 78, and, e.g., *Thesm*. 192, 267–268; perhaps also fr. 793, 844).

Aristophanes' liking for paratragedy is famous from plays such as *Acharnians* or *Thesmophoriazusae*. The fragments also provide ample evidence. Even though there are cases where the model is known (fr. 1, fr. 111 with the high-flown βαθύπλουτε clashing with the homely diminutive ζευγάριον βοεικόν; in fr. 592.35 Agathon is explicitly quoted), it is often nothing but the tragic style of a passage that gives away the parodic intention (e.g., fr. 98 with the lexeme ὀρκωμοτεῖν for normal ὀμνύναι, fr. 256 with the genitive Ζηνός, fr. 302 with 'Doric' τὰν κόραν for τὴν κόρην and the word δύσποτμον, fr. 570 with the phrase διπτύχω κόρῳ, fr. 307, 489, 573, 602, 703, 718, 734). Fr. dub. 962, in which a female character is asked to stop μελῳδοῦσα and speak in a normal way (πεζῇ φράσον), must have stood in a context where the difference of register funnily impaired straightforward communication (cf. *Av*. 1382).

Cratinus fr. 342, with its famous reference to someone who is ὑπολεπτολόγος γνωμιδιώκτης εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων, is often understood as if Cratinus saw quibbling verbal art as typical not only of Euripides but also of Aristophanes (and by implication as less characteristic of his own style), but the crucial term need not imply anything like that: the εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων may be someone who is not 'speaking in the style of Euripides and Aristophanes' but rather someone who is 'speaking in the style of Aristophanes playing/staging Euripides' (cf., e.g., Ar. *Ran*. 499 Ἡρακλειοξανθίας 'Xanthias playing Heracles', Cratinus fr. 502 Χοιριλεκφαντίδης 'Ecphantides using Choerilus' work (?)'; but inversely Cratinus' title Διονυσαλέξανδρος 'Dionysus in the guise of Alexander/Paris'). Furthermore, it is difficult to believe the source of Cratinus' fragment and regard Aristophanes' own fr. 488 as an acknowledgment of such 'Euripidising': given that they are iambic trimeters, these lines can hardly have contained an autoreferential comment of the comic poet (whose criticism of Euripides' λαλιά expresses itself in fr. 595, 656, 682, just as in *Acharnians* or *Frogs*; note that the criticism in *Frogs* of Aeschylus' austere style has its parallel in the fragments too: fr. 663).

Parodies of text genres other than tragedy are also found. In fr. 29 (cf. various passages in *Knights*, *Peace*, *Birds*, and *Lysistrata*; fr. 241) there is probably a parodic oracle in hexameters with epic forms like ἠΰτε or τελέει from the play Ἀμφιάραος (an oracular deity), and in fr. 590.52 we find a phrase borrowed from Alcman. However, as in the complete plays (despite occasional exceptions like *Pax* 1270–1289 or *Av*. 693–702), there is little evidence for parody of epic poetry: phrases like χναυμάτια πτερόεντα in fr. 236 at the end of an anapaest occasionally borrow epic elements, but more concrete cases, like the one apparently lost around the para-Hesiodic fr. 239, are rare.

The comic potential of foreign dialects is best illustrated with the relevant passages from *Acharnians* and *Lysistrata*. Here too the fragments provide some supplementary material. In fr. 465 there is an Ionic form ῥυφεῖν for Attic ῥοφεῖν (cf. also fr. 626, 954?), in fr. 556 there is a quoted speech of some effeminate Ionians (cf., e.g., ὅκως for ὅπως), and in fr. 810 the forms δυάκις and τριάκις for δίς and τρίς may have been cited from a Laconian passage (whereas the Doric form Λακαινᾶν in fr. 225 is probably quoted from a song and best compared with a case like *Eq*. 1225; the 'Boeotian' ὀπίττομαι (?) of fr. 867 is suspect). In fr. 81 of the Βαβυλώνιοι, the chorus of foreign slaves is announced with the words κεκράξονται βαρβαριστί, but we do not know whether the following choral passage really contained some pidgin elements like

those in the mouth of the Scythian in *Thesmophoriazusae*. The function of the nonce word νεβλάρετοι (= περαίνειν) in fr. 252 of the Δαιταλῆς is uncertain as well, and the pronunciation of ἄρκτος as ἄρτος (fr. dub. 955), which might be thought to reflect substandard Attic, is presented as a speech defect rather than as a solecism: its main function is to feed the following jokes. In fr. 267 someone (the chorus of Δαναΐδες?) is instructed to use an Egyptian word (κυλλᾶστις for some kind of 'bread').

The technique of excessively accumulating a particular word type to create a comic effect or to characterise a group of speakers (as in *Eq*. 1378–1380 with the adjectives in -ικός) is represented in fr. 92 with a series of diminutives (χρυσιδάριον, ἱματιδάριον, λοιδορημάτιον, νοσημάτιον). In such cases an element of social criticism is often inherent, but it is seldom as explicit as in the *Knights* passage or in the fragmentary Δαιταλῆς, where two brothers are opposed to each other, the one having undergone a sophistic education and therefore being well versed in modern matters such as oratory with all its fashionable vocabulary (cf. fr. 205, 233), the other—just like his father—having been brought up in a conservative way, learning to understand the Homeric poems and therefore being able to explain even the most obscure terms of this traditional lore (fr. 233).

Punning is omnipresent in the Aristophanic fragments. For example, in fr. 159 the fixed phrase ἀνδρῶν Ἀθηναίων ἀποικία is turned into ἀνδρῶν κεστρέων ἀποικία 'a colony of mullet men' (the mullet being a fish whose stomach was said always to be empty), fr. 169 plays on the double meaning of πόλος 'celestial sphere/sun dial', fr. 545 comments on the paradoxon of a τρίπους τράπεζα (cf. Cratinus fr. 334; Epich. fr. 147), fr. 629 puns on the place name Γέλα (cf. *Ach*. 606 with the invented Καταγέλα), and fr. 666 exploits the resemblance of ἀργός and ἀγρός (cf. fr. 595 ἅλας/λάλας, fr. 724 ταμίας/Λαμίας).

The comic neologisms in the Aristophanic fragments are not spectacular: fr. 100 ὠτοκάταξις for a boxer whose ears are 'broken', fr. 270 with a personal name in the superlative (Δαναώτατος), or fr. 437 with the adjective Ἀττικωνικός combined from Ἀττικός and Λακωνικός (cf. *Pax* 215) all remain colourless.

Comic names appear for instance in fr. 126 with the invented Hermes epithet Στρεψαῖος (because of Hermes' thieving eyes which turn everywhere), in fr. 198 with the 'epithet' Εὐρύβατος (Ζεύς) modelled after the Homeric phrase εὐρύοπα Ζεύς and alluding to a crook named Εὐρύβατος, in fr. 244 where Alcibiades is said to have been born in the year when

Φαλληνίας was archon, or in fr. 303 where Βύρσα is the name of a city of the gods. Less subtly, a real person's name is applied to a (vulgar) thing when Ἀριστόδημος is used as a word for πρωκτός (fr. 242; cf. Cratinus fr. 160, fr. com. adesp. 283, fr. com. adesp. 351) or Ἱπποκλείδης for the female genitals (fr. 721).

The following fragments contain interesting grammatical irregularities: fr. 26 (vocative Φρυνῶνδα with short -α), fr. 238 (allegedly Old Attic παρανοία and ἀναιδεία; but cf. *Eq*. 323 with the usual ἀναίδεια), fr. 318 (nom. pl. ἥρως for ἥρωες; cf. fr. 322 acc. pl. ἥρως, fr. 712 acc. sg. ἥρων), fr. 353 (adverbial ἀμεινόνως instead of ἄμεινον?), fr. 356 (aorist διαλέξασθαι for διαλεχθῆναι), fr. 466 (nondirectional παρά + acc. σέ for παρὰ σοί, as in various northern dialects), fr. 631 (κάθου instead of classical κάθησο as imperative of κάθημαι; cf., e.g., Alexis fr. 226), fr. 664 (an 'absolute nominative/accusative' τὸ στρόφιον λυθέν 'once the breastband was untied'; cf. *Ach*. 1182), fr. 798 (nom. pl. βοῦς for βόες, *metri gratia*), and fr. 820 (impf. ἐπροτίμων; cf. fr. 815).

In fr. 71 from the early Βαβυλώνιοι, the island Samos receives the epithet πολυγράμματος, 'many lettered'. If this word alludes to the difference between the Attic alphabet and that of East Ionia with the additional letters ⟨ψ⟩ and ⟨ω⟩, the fragment might have interesting implications for the history of Athenian writing: it could then be inferred that the Ionic alphabet was not yet completely acculturated in Athens. Unfortunately, other interpretations seem possible, and the evidence would be too tenuous to help answering the question in which alphabet Aristophanes himself wrote his first plays; the strongest case so far has been made in favour of an Ionic system.

2. *Crates*

According to Aristotle (*Poet*. 1449b7–9 = *test*. 5), Crates concentrated on plot construction and refrained from verbal attacks in the tradition of the iambographers (τῆς ἰαμβικῆς ἰδέας ἀφέμενος); in fact, the fragments do not preserve any traces of strong comic abuse.

In the Γείτονες, Crates seems to have introduced a speaker of a foreign (Ionic) dialect, if the form ὅκωσπερ in fr. 1 can be trusted. The dramatic function of this dialect passage is less clear than that of fr. 46, where a doctor (either a true one or an impostor as in Menander's *Aspis*) is speaking in Doric, no doubt because this dialect was regarded as the trademark of the specialist trained in the famous medical schools of Cos or Cnidus (cf. Alexis fr. 146). This is the only fragment of Old Comedy

in which a doctor appears on stage, whereas such figures became very common in Middle and New Comedy and already belonged to the stock characters of popular farce (Athen. 14.621d–e).

In another scene, of the play Λαμία, Crates apparently presented a woman (or perhaps the hermaphrodite Lamia) who imitated the voice (or more generally language/style?: φωνή) of a man (or men) (fr. 24). As in several Aristophanic plays, the audience would see a male actor impersonating a female character impersonating a male person.

An epic phrase with tmesis (ἀπὸ χεῖρας ἔχεσθαι), possibly taken over from Empedocles, occurs in fr. 19 at the end of an anapaestic tetrameter.

For the historical linguist, it is interesting to note that Crates used the adverb πάνυ with a superlative if the transmission of fr. 43 is correct: the construction is otherwise attested only in late Greek. Morphologically irregular formations are found in fr. 17 (poetic future ῥεύσεται for ῥυήσεται; cf. Pherecrates fr. 137.5 and Ar. *Eq*. 526) and in fr. 51 (ἀναστῶ instead of ἀναστήσω, in analogy with future forms like κρεμῶ). In fr. 5 the particle ἄν is omitted in a conditional clause with subjunctive (cf. Cratinus fr. 30, Ar. *Eq*. 698, 700, *Pax* 450, *Av*. 928–930).

3. *Cratinus*

According to Platonius, the main characteristic of Cratinus' comedy as compared with that of Aristophanes or Eupolis was his 'harsh' outspokenness (*test*. 17: αὐστηρὸς ταῖς λοιδορίαις). In the *Life of Aristophanes* Cratinus is singled out, together with Eupolis, for excessive πικρότης and αἰσχρότης (*test*. 25). Platonius assumes that this peculiarity of Cratinus' style had something to do with a particular interest in the iambographic tradition, and the title of one comedy, Ἀρχίλοχοι, might speak in favour of such a hypothesis (cf. also fr. 211 with a quotation of Archilochus fr. 109 W. in Cratinus' Πυτίνη 'Flask').

However, the fragments of Cratinus' Ἀρχίλοχοι do not display an unusual degree of verbal aggressiveness, although certain people (e.g., Βάθιππος and Καλλίας: fr. 11, 12) were attacked in it, and although some passages were vulgar (fr. 3, with a modified proverb). An interesting feature of the Ἀρχίλοχοι is the occurrence of an Ionic form ὁμοίη (fr. 8, also with dat. pl. πίννῃσι), probably because Ionic was the dialect of the iambographers as well as the epic poets Homer and Hesiod (who also figured in the play, not necessarily as speaking characters—although the hexameter in fr. 7, containing the word πεσσοί with non-Attic consonantism, and the reference to a blind speaker in fr. 6 rather point in that

direction). In fr. 1 of the Ἀρχίλοχοι there is a speaker Μητρόβιος, who calls himself γραμματεύς 'scribe' and therefore (unlike the speaker of fr. 128) must be a person with at least a basic literary education (as is also implied by the high-flown verb ηὔχουν 'I thought, I was confident'); since he expresses his admiration of Cimon with the Laconian praise term θεῖος ἀνήρ and uses the preposition σύν instead of Attic μετά, linguistic philo-Laconism could be indicated. All this, together with the occurrence of common colloquialisms such as βαΰζειν and λαλεῖν (fr. 6), suggests that Cratinus could switch from one style or mode of expression to the next as quickly as Aristophanes.

From Cratinus' fragments it seems that he parodied epic poetry more often than did Aristophanes. One may for instance think of the theme of Cratinus' Διονυσαλέξανδρος; of fr. 21 with the Homeric *hapax legomenon* ἀνδρακάς; of fr. 61 with the epic compound ἐριβῶλαξ; of fr. 143 with the Homeric middle present ὄρῶμαι at the end of an anapaestic tetrameter (in the Ὀδυσσῆς, a play parodying Homer's *Odyssey*); of fr. 148, 149, and 150 (from the same Ὀδυσσῆς) with various Homeric echoes such as the verb ἀλυσκάζειν and the line-end formula ἐρίηρας ἑταίρους; of fr. 258 and fr. 259 with a parodic cosmogony containing epic epitheta (πρεσβυγενής, κεφαληγερέτας applied to Pericles ← Homeric νεφεληγερέτα; κυνῶπις applied to Aspasia); of fr. 349 with a hexametric quotation from, and transformation of, a Hesiodic passage (ὄφρα σε λιμὸς ἐχθαίρῃ); of fr. 352 with a distorted line of Homer (cf. fr. 102); or of fr. 355, according to which Cratinus made fun of Homer's frequent use of τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος. More puzzling is the hexameter in fr. 161 from the Πανόπται, a play on the sophists: it contains a hyper-Doric form ἀριθματοί, and one may wonder whether this was put into the mouth of a sophist from the Doric-speaking areas of Magna Graecia or Sicily (such as Hippon, who certainly featured in that play: fr. 167).

Grammatical irregularities occur in fr. 44 (masc. τάριχος, as in Ar. fr. 207, Chionides fr. 5, Crates fr. 19, Pl. Com. fr. 49, instead of 'usual' Attic ntr. τάριχος), fr. 47 (ἄνηστις for regular νῆστις 'with an empty stomach' as in Ar. fr. 159 or Theopomp. Com. fr. 14; cf. similarly Pherecrates fr. 79 ἀνόδους vs. Phrynichus fr. 85, etc., νωδός), fr. 60 (1st sg. opt. pres. act. ἁμάρτοιν for ἁμάτροιμι, in comedy unparalleled but occurring at the end of an anapaestic tetrameter where poetic forms are common: see above on fr. 143 ὄρῶμαι, and cf. fr. 235 with οὖθαρ ἀρούρης, fr. 107 with ὑπὸ ποσσίν in a dimeter, or Ar. *Eq*. 529 with Cratinus fr. 70 and *Vesp*. 652 with Homeric ὦ πάτερ ἠμέτερε Κρονίδη, both fitted into an anapaestic line), fr. 61 ('Doric' vocative Πανδιονίδα instead of -η

in a non-Doric context, but in an anapaestic dimeter), fr. 62 (τόν as relative pronoun in a lyric passage; cf. Ar. *Thesm*. 126), fr. 112 (2nd sg. perf. οἶσθας as in later writers for οἶσθα; cf. Alexis fr. 15), fr. 115 (impersonal δεῖ + acc. + ὅπως with fut. ind.: δεῖ σ' ὅπως διοίσεις), fr. 133 (part. act. προβῶντες, as if from a thematic verb *προβάω; cf. frequent imperatives like κατάβα), fr. 147 (gen. sg. Λαέρτα for Attic Λαέρτου; perhaps the poetic, though un-epic, form characterises the speaking Cyclops as bombastic?), fr. 171.9 (1st pl. aor. ἐφήσαμεν for classical Attic ἔφαμεν), fr. 183 (3rd pl. aor. opt. ἀμύναιν for ἀμύναιεν in a hexameter, conjectured for unmetrical ἀμύναιντο *vel sim*.; the form is all the more remarkable since the so-called Aeolic optatives with -ειαν rather than -αιεν were regular in the language of Old Comedy), fr. 272 (πράσσω for Attic πράττω in a proverbial expression), fr. 421 (βαδίζου for βάδιζε, possibly a 'datism' of a foreigner; cf. Ar. *Pax* 291 and perhaps Alcaeus fr. 30, 31?), fr. 424 (βέθρον for βέρεθρον, perhaps a colloquial allegro form), and fr. 472 (3rd sg. opt. μέμνοιτο or μεμνοῖτο for μεμνῇτο; cf. Ar. *Plut*. 991, but neither the form nor the ascription are certain).

An interesting piece of unclassical vocabulary is Cratinus' ἐξαυτῆς for παραχρῆμα 'immediately' (fr. 37). Also, his use of the adjective ἅγιος with the meaning 'accursed' is unique (fr. 402, cf. Lat. *sacer*; ἅγιος is rare in Attic anyway).

Like Aristophanes, Cratinus created his own comic lexicon (compare for instance fr. 456 ἐφετίνδα '(to play) at ἔφεσις = judicial appeals' with Ar. *Eq*. 855 ὀστρακίνδα '(to play) at ostracism'): in fr. 66 the seer Lampon is called ἀγερσικύβηλις 'axe collector' (since he made his living with the sacrificial axe), in fr. 239 some sophists or orators are referred to as ἀργυροκοπιστῆρες λόγων 'word-money-coiners', and in fr. 428 a glutton becomes a γαστροχάρυβδις 'whirlpool-belly' (cf. fr. com. adesp. 629 μεθυσοχάρυβδις).

Cratinus' comic names include Δωρώ and Δεξώ for invented goddesses of corruption and bribery (fr. 70, 435; cf. fr. dub. 510 Ἐμβλώ, fr. com. adesp. 324 Ἐγχώ), and Κλαυσαμενός, perhaps for a real or imaginary whiny fellow (fr. 111).

Despite the great number of fragments, there is little evidence for the staging of speakers of foreign dialects (note the promising title Λάκωνες). In fr. 78 at least one (allegedly) Boeotian adjective ἀμπαλίνωρος 'returning back' is cited, and this *may* have been used by a Boeotian chorus in the play Θρᾷτται. In fr. 246 of the Χείρωνες Cratinus' Solon (?) uses the uncontracted form οἰκέω; he must have spoken in the Ionic

dialect of his poems. Cratinus' repeated (fr. 258, 352) mention of a separate vocabulary of the gods, however, is unlikely to have been elaborated into more-than-isolated references to the notion of a divine language, which is also known from the Homeric poems (cf. Epich. fr. 40, Sannyrion fr. 1).

Fr. 45, together with Ar. fr. 648, is an important testimony for the pronunciation of ⟨η⟩ in classical Attic. Since these fragments reproduce the sound made by sheep as ⟨βῆ⟩, ⟨η⟩ must still have represented an open vowel (and not yet a closed [ē̞]).

4. *Eupolis*

The anonymous author of Περὶ κωμῳδίας saw in Eupolis a gifted follower of Cratinus' comic style with its inclination towards λοιδορία (*test*. 2). For Persius, too, Eupolis is *iratus*, probably because of uncompromising personal attacks like those against Alcibiades in the Βάπται (where the imitation of Alcibiades' lisp, alluded to in Ar. *Vesp*. 44–45 and Archippus fr. 48, is alleged to have brought Eupolis into serious trouble: Βάπται *test*. iv). A scholiast on Ar. *Nub*. 296 stresses the (thematic) vulgarism of Eupolis' comedies (*test*. 20; cf. *test*. 42), but for Platonius he was full of charm (χαρίεις: *test*. 34).

In the fragments we find the usual linguistic devices of comedy, but on the whole Eupolis' verbal inventiveness seems to have been more limited than that of Cratinus and Aristophanes. Linguistic and stylistic parodies are found, for instance, in fr. 16 with a hymnic address to the Χάριτες, who care for boiled fishes (αἷσι μέλλουσι ἑψητοί), in fr. 80 with a tragic phrase ξένης ἀπὸ χθονός (cf. also fr. 99.35–36, fr. 112, fr. 207 with a parody of Aeschylus' *Persians*, and fr. 231 with one of Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*), or in fr. 259.106 εὐ]ρύκρειο[ν and fr. 315 (a complete hexameter) with a Homeric and a Hesiodic echo.

That a play called Εἵλωτες presented speakers of a foreign dialect (Spartan) is not surprising (whereas the similar title Λάκωνες was perhaps wrongly ascribed to Eupolis) (fr. 147, fr. 149, fr. 151 where αἰσχοῦν must be transmitted for βισχοῦν, i.e., the Laconian pronunciation of [ϝ]ισχύν, fr. 153, fr. 155; also fr. 472 πεπαγοίην?, fr. 480 σιοκόλος?). The Doric vocalism of μᾶτερ Μεγάλα in fr. 259.115 may belong to a similar context, and an Ionic word τύλη 'padding, cushion' was perhaps used by the sophist Protagoras in the Κόλακες (fr. 170; cf. fr. 34 τρηχύς, fr. 464 λελάβηκα?). Finally, in fr. 390 a Thracian gloss ζῆλα or ζελά 'wine' is found.

Like other comic poets (cf. Pl. Com. fr. 183), Eupolis considered the mastery of the Attic dialect to be mandatory for Attic politicians. Doubts about the proficiency of some of them were raised in fr. 99.23–25 from the Δῆμοι (a play in which various people's rhetorical abilities played an important role: fr. 102, 103; cf. fr. 116) and quite possibly also in the Μαρικᾶς (a play whose title—originally a Persian word—suggests that Hyperbolus was presented as an oriental cheat; cf. fr. 208 for Marikas' lack of education). In fr. 220 about Syracosius, the point is probably not an alleged foreign accent.

In the Βάπται Eupolis portrayed a group of effeminate Athenian men worshipping the Goddess Κοτυτώ and having their own special vocabulary, which supposedly included words like βάταλος for πρωκτός (fr. 92).

The following fragments contain further notable details: fr. 13 (epic ἠδέ 'and' in an anapaestic list without parodic aim), fr. 28 (if correctly transmitted with a 3rd pl. plupf. ἐθελήθεισαν as in later Greek for classical -θεσαν), fr. 41 (poetic Περσεφόνη for Attic Φερρέφαττα in an anapaestic tetrameter), fr. 77 (particle combination ἀλλὰ γάρ as an equivalent of simple δέ; cf. also the unusual καὶ δὴ δέ in fr. 99.1), fr. 83 (non-Attic μαστίζω for μαστιγόω), fr. 87 (ὑπάγω 'to go' as in later Greek), fr. 99.81/105 (epic κυκεῶ for κυκεῶνα in a non-epic passage), fr. 106 (poetic κέαρ in the mouth of a Marathon fighter, perhaps because the archaising form fitted the nostalgia of the character; cf. Ar. *Ach*. 5), fr. 142 (ἥσθημα for ἡδονή, possibly mocking the tragic preference for full-sounding words in -μα), fr. 249 (the effeminate Philoxenus is called θήλεια; cf. Ar. *Nub*. 692), fr. 309 (ὁ φῶνος 'the sound' for ἡ φωνή, perhaps imitating morphological inventions in the higher registers of contemporary poetry rather than a deliberate barbarism like fr. 310 with 3rd sg. fut. κατακλιεῖ for κατακλήσει; cf. Ar. *Av*. 42 Βάδος, fr. com. adesp. 222 τῖμος), fr. 330 (superlative ἀφθονεστάτην, for which parallels are cited by the source of the fragment, Eustathius).

Eupolis' vocabulary and onomastics occasionally show the comic spirit of Aristophanes and Cratinus, with highlights like the γυναίκες εἰλίποδες, who receive the Homeric epithet becuse they cross their legs in society (fr. 174), the formation of a para-Homeric epithet κοιλοδαίμων 'belly-fated' (after ὀλβιοδαίμων; cf. fr. 285 σκευοφοριώτην for σκευοφόρον after the divine epithet εἰραφιώτης), the multiple compound ταγηνοκνισοθήρας 'frying-pan hunter' for a parasite (cf. the even longer ἀμφιπτολεμοπηδησίστρατος in fr. 424), the obscene comic name Εὐτρήσιος (fr. 64, from τετραίνω 'to bore through'), the pseudo-demotic

Ὀνοκίνδιος (fr. 195, from a word for 'donkey driver'), or the nickname Καπνός for a certain Theogenes who always promised and never gave (fr. 135; cf. fr. 224 Πορθάων for an 'epic' ancestor of the general Adeimantus). There are also punning references to geographical names (fr. 416, 439, 487).

In antiquity, fr. 331 was taken to mean that Cleon was the first person to have introduced an (official?) letter with the formulaic χαίρειν (Κλέων Ἀθηναίων τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ χαίρειν). If we could be sure that there is no misunderstanding, we would welcome this as a rare piece of firsthand information about linguistic pragmatics.

5. *Hermippus*

In fr. 3 of the Ἀθηνᾶς γοναί, someone is said to have the language of a peaceful lamb even though his character is that of a dragon. We do not know if this character's style was actually differentiated from that of other characters. That stylistic matters were important in this play could be suggested by the double irregularity in fr. 2: Zeus is quoted with the expression ὄνομα δίδωμι (instead of normal ὄνομα τίθεμαι), and the verbal form used to introduce the quotation is ἠσί 'he says', which is not attested elsewhere in Attic Greek.

The situation is clearer in the comedy Ἀρτοπώλιδες. Here one character (presumably the barbarian mother of the politician Hyperbolus) was unable to speak correct Attic and therefore said things like fr. 10 τάριχος πίονα (for τάριχος πῖον) and fr. 12 δοκικῶ (for δοκῶ). Similarly, a line of the Θεοί contained two solecistic middle forms πινώμεθ(α) and διψώμεθα (fr. 24). However, since fr. 41 states that Hermippus also used the active διαλέγειν for correct διαλέγεσθαι and since fr. 66 contains the irregular perfect form ἀπεδημηκότες and fr. 74 the non-Attic verb αἱμορρυχιᾶν 'to have a bloody snout' (i.e., 'to suffer from nose bleeding' or 'to have a bloody face'?; cf. Cratinus fr. 486), not all of these items must have belonged to characters with insufficient grammatical knowledge. It is equally possible that Hermippus showed less respect for literary or grammatical standards.

In various fragments Hermippus parodies Homeric diction (fr. 47 αἴθωνι Κλέωνι after Homeric αἴθωνι σιδήρῳ, fr. 55 πασσαλόφιν) and epic style, most notably in a long hexametric catalogue, with introductory address to the Muses, of imported goods (fr. 63 with line-end phrases like ἐπ' οἴνοπα πόντον or νηῒ μελαίνῃ; note the disregard of the original ϝ- in οἴνοπα, whereas Homer has a hiatus ἐπὶ οἴνοπα) and in a fragment

of epic praise for a certain kind of wine (fr. 77). In both cases several distinctly Attic forms were not adapted to the Homeric dialect (e.g., fr. 63 with ναυσὶν ἐπὶ γλαφυραῖς for Homeric νηυσὶν ἐπὶ γλαφυρῇς with short ᾰ, ψώραν without Ionic η; fr. 77 with Attic ὀσμὴ θεσπεσία next to ὀδμή and θαλείῃ with epic consonantism and vocalism). The situation is similar to that of the pseudo-epic cosmogony in the parabasis of Aristophanes' *Birds*, which contains much epic phraseology but does not show a consistent dialect shift (cf., e.g., Ar. *Av*. 699 ἐνεόττευσεν).

6. *Pherecrates*

Pherecrates was famous for his originality in plot construction (*test*. 2) and for his pure Attic (*test*. 10). It is difficult to say whether these two things were related to each other, but it is at least possible that by concentrating on the comic plot he focussed less on verbal mobility in the manner of Aristophanes and Cratinus. Word creations like the comic feminines μαγείραινα 'cookess' and ἰχθυοπώλαινα 'fish mongeress' (fr. 70: cf. for the suffix fr. 186 ἀνδροκάπραινα; with a different suffix fr. 271 στρατηγίς) or the comparative κυντερώτερα (fr. 111; cf. Eubulus fr. 83) may have sounded funny, but they are rare. The interesting formation (τὸ παιδίον τὸ) πολλαγόρασον in fr. 132 need not have been an invention of Pherecrates'; as a current colloquialism, it could be built with the suffix -ασος or derived from the invitation πόλλ' ἀγόρασον 'buy much!' (cried out by slaves at market tables). The special currency of Hades in the Κραπάταλοι, however, bears the mark of originality (Κραπάταλοι *test*. i, fr. 86:1 κραπαταλός = 2 ψωθίαι/ψωθία = 8 κίκκαβοι), and fr. 145 reflects a comedian's interest in humorous uses of synonymy.

Literary parody is infrequent. In the Κραπάταλοι the poet Aeschylus was one of the characters, but the line quoted in fr. 100 is not as bombastic as many comparable lines in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. At the beginning of fr. 155 from the Χείρων, there are some paratragic elements put into the mouth of Μουσική, who complains about her maltreatment by the 'New School' of music (cf., e.g., the verb κλυεῖν), but she soon switches into a more conversational mode (for paratragedy see further fr. 141 and perhaps fr. 211 with the apocopated verbal form ἄγχασκε; for the latter cf. Amipsias fr. 12 καββαλών). An extensive parody of hexameter poetry also figured in this play (fr. 162).

Since Pherecrates was Ἀττικώτατος, it is surprising that there are two fragments in which highly irregular forms of the word γυνή are attested; these *may* have been sociolectal variants (fr. 96 with acc. sg. γυνήν,

fr. 206 with acc. pl. γυνάς; cf. Alcaeus fr. 32). The unusual feminine form Ἀθηναίαις 'to the Athenian women' in fr. 39 jocularly variates the legal formula Ἀθηναίοις καὶ τοῖς ξυμμάχοις and is therefore easier to justify (cf. also Cantharus fr. 5).

Similarly, the following exceptions are relatively unproblematic, but they do prove that Pherecrates—like all the other poets of Old Comedy—occasionally made use of grammatical and lexical elements that, without being 'wrong', were excluded from conservative strata of Attic: fr. 46 (Θησέῳ for Θησείῳ, with the diphthong measured short before the following vowel, as in ποιέω/ποέω), fr. 56 (aor. subj. ἀποκριθῶ for ἀποκρίνωμαι, as in later texts), fr. 79 and fr. 87 (ἀνόδοντος for νωδός), fr. 113.18 (γάλακτι measured with a short middle syllable, hence possibly pronounced as γάλατι or γάλακι?), fr. 123 (ἀμφέξομαι allegedly used as future of ἀμφιέννυμαι but perhaps more naturally to be taken as future of ἀμπέχομαι), fr. 152 (thematic ὀμνύουσι; cf. Ar. *Plut*. 719, Alcaeus fr. 15), fr. 183 (imperative καθίζανε instead of common κάθησο), fr. 215 (ἁλιῶς for ἁλιέως, i.e., ἁλιέως pronounced with synizesis), fr. 218 (fut. ἀναστῶ for ἀναστήσω; cf. Crates fr. 51, Archippus fr. 54), fr. 239 (imp. ἐξένεγκον for ἐξένεγκε), fr. 246 (imp. ζῆθι as if from an athematic verb; cf. Philemon fr. 194), and fr. 273 (adverb ταχεωστί for ταχέως).

7. *Phrynichus*

According to Aristophanes' *Frogs* (Ar. *Ran*. 12–15 = Phrynichus *test*. 8), Phrynichus' comedies consisted of cheap jokes, but obviously this allegation must not be taken at face value. The fragments exhibit a normal range of comic style, with parodies (cf., e.g., the prayer in fr. 16 with the formulaic wish ἀνίει τἀγαθά, the quotations of Sophocles in fr. 48 and of Lamprocles in fr. 78 with their Doric vocalism, or fr. 52 and fr. 61 with non-Attic σσ), word plays, comic names (fr. 18), and novel word formations (e.g., the 'epic' ἀναπηρόβιος 'with maimed life' in the hexameter of fr. 75: cf. Ar. *Av*. 685 ἀμαυρόβιος in the Bird Cosmogony, Pl. Com. fr. 265 αὐχμηρόβιος).

The use of ἀεί for ἕως/μέχρι is unfortunately cited without a context (fr. 7). Another peculiarity is the adjective ἀμάθητος for ἀμαθής, which is unusual despite the great productivity of adjectives in ἀ-τος in classical Attic (cf. fr. 19 ἀγέλαστος, ἀδιάλεκτος, fr. 57 ἀναπόνιπτος). There is a non-Attic form ἦμιν for ἡμῖν in fr. 38 (cf. Ar. *Av*. 386?), but a simple change of word order could do away with it, and it

is therefore insufficient as evidence for a dialectal or parodic passage. The contracted form τιμοῦντι instead of τιμῶντι in fr. 63 is either a copyist's mistake or comically modelled upon the following correct ἀτιμοῦντι.

The verb σελλίζεσθαι 'to boast' (fr. 10) may be a comic formation, based on the name of a certain braggart Aischines son of Sellus—unless the latter is a comic patronym itself (cf., e.g., fr. 55 Κλεόμβροτος ὁ Πέρδικος).

8. *Plato Comicus*

Like most of his colleagues, the comedian Plato often made fun of tragedy, Euripidean and other (e.g., that of Sthenelus and Melanthius: fr. 72, 140; also paracomedy: fr. 86). The most explicit cases are fr. 29 where Plato attacks Euripides' 'sigmatism', that is, the excessive use of words containing sibilant sounds (cf. Eubulus fr. 26), and fr. 144 where Plato transforms a Euripidean ἔχθιστον τέκος into ἔχθιστον τέγος (cf. Ar. *Pax* 528).

An extensive piece of epic parody occurs in fr. 189 'presenting' a new cookery book by Philoxenus of Cythera. Here the choice of epic language is not accidental not only since it was the highest (and therefore least appropriate) register available, but also because there may even have been contemporary attempts without (overt) parodic intention to clad similar themes in an epic dress (as with Archestratus of Gela).

In his Κλεοφῶν Plato staged a conversation between the politician and his mother, whose language was full of barbarisms because she was (or was said to be) of Thracian origin (fr. 61; cf. Ar. *Ran*. 681, Eupolis fr. 262, and Hermippus fr. 10, 12). Perhaps the solecism ἐμαυτός belonged to a similar context in the Μέτοικοι (fr. 83), for Plato was obviously interested in such deficiencies: in the Ὑπέρβολος (fr. 183) he also commented on Hyperbolus' (?) vulgar pronunciation of διῃτώμην as δῃτώμην (i.e., presumably with an anlaut [dy-] instead of [di-]) and of ὀλίγον as ὀλίον (i.e., [oliyon] as in Modern Greek and already in Rhinthon fr. 2; similar sociolectal phenomena are reflected in Amphis fr. 30).

No dialect passages are attested for the play Λάκωνες, but in fr. 10 (from the Κρόνος) the word ἐπιπόρπαμα (for a musician's cloak) occurs with Doric vocalism, probably in order to make it sound like a high-flown term of citharoedic art. The epic form πίπτῃσι for πίπτῃ in fr. 168 is not parodic, but due to the anapaestic metre.

The evidence for verbal humour is not very substantial, and puns are relatively infrequent (cf., e.g., fr. 188.4 ἐν τῷ καπήλῳ for ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ). Whether Plato really coined the noun βῖνος 'a fuck' (fr. 43) is uncertain: the transmitted text could be restored differently (but note the comic name Σεβῖνος in fr. 125). Fr. 130 contains a parodic epiclesis to a human being with the comic epithet ἄναξ ὑπήνης 'Lord of the Beard', fr. 132 has a series of pseudo-epic compounds (e.g., ἑλκετρίβων after Homeric ἑλκεχίτων), and in fr. 188 there are two invented heroic names, Λόρδων and Κύβδασος (both with an obscene innuendo).

The view that Plato's Attic was less pure than that of his comic colleagues can be supported not only by the frequent entries in the Antiatticist (e.g., fr. 67 with the 'late' interjection ἴσσα or fr. 155 with the adverb ἀπαρτί in the meaning 'from now on'), but also by instances like fr. 23 and (probably) fr. 49 with a future ἀπολέσω for ἀπολῶ, fr. 99 with intransitive στρέψαι 'to turn about', fr. 220 with ἀπωλίαν instead of ἀπώλειαν, and especially fr. 247, according to which Aristophanes of Byzantium stressed that ὁ πρόσωπος and τοῦ γάλα (for τὸ πρόσωπον and τοῦ γάλακτος) were not cited from parodic or intentionally solecistic passages in Plato's comedies (cf. further fr. 262 with ἄσκη for ἄσκησις and fr. 263 with ᾠσμός for ᾆσμα). Like ἀπολέσω, fr. 266 ἀφῆκαν for ἀφεῖσαν may be an innovative form, but elsewhere Plato also adopted conservative morphological and lexical options: fr. dub. 300, if correctly attributed, implies that there was at least one case of 1st sg. ἦ 'I was' (not: ἦν), and fr. 281 mentions Plato's use of the word ποδοκάκκη 'stocks', which the speaker of Lysias 10 regards as archaic and out of date. Here, as in many other cases, it is slightly doubtful whether the source of the citation is really referring to the comic poet and not to his more famous namesake, the philosopher.

9. *Strattis*

Strattis is the first author in whose work we find the actual word παρατραγῳδεῖν (fr. 50) for the comic technique. Fr. 1 implies that parody of Euripidean tragedy was one theme in the play Ἀνθρωποφόρβη (cf. also the titles Λημνομέδα, possibly a contamination of Euripides' Ἀνδρομέδα with Sophocles' Λήμνιαι, Μήδεια, Μυρμιδόνες, Φιλοκτήτης, Φοίνισσαι, and Χρύσιππος). More specifically, fr. 1 refers to the tragic actor Hegelochus, whose famous mispronunciation of γαλήν' ὁρῶ 'I see a calm of the sea' as γαλῆν ὁρῶ 'I see a polecat' had become a laughing stock of comedy, as shown by fr. 63 (cf. Ar. *Ran.* 303, Sannyrion fr. 8, and for Hegelochus' unpleasant voice Pl. Com. fr. 235).

Paratragic lines and quotations from tragedy are most widespread in Strattis' fragments (e.g., fr. 42, 46–48, 66?, 71 with a parodic choral song), but he must have parodied other genres as well. The play Κινησίας was directed against the impious dithyrambist of the same name, who receives the epithet χοροκτόνος 'choir killer' in fr. 16; unfortunately, the fragments do not preserve any paradithyrambic passage sung by a 'killed choir'. According to fr. 17, Cinesias was addressed as Φθιῶτ' Ἀχιλλεῦ in the comedy because he incessantly used the word Φθιῶτα in his poetry. Other poets got their due too, for Strattis' comic colleague Sannyrion was referred to as κάναβος '(potter's) skeleton' (fr. 21; cf. fr. 57).

Dialectal parody was used by Strattis in the Μακεδόνες where a Boeotian (?) and an Attic person discussed the name of a certain kind of fish (fr. 29: σφύραινα vs. κέστρα); in the same play the feminine Μακεδόνισσα with the foreign (Macedonian?) suffix -ισσα was used (fr. 33). In the Φοίνισσαι a speaker of Attic comments on the dialectal phonology and lexicon of Thebes in Boeotia (fr. 49 with, e.g., τῦκα for σῦκα, βέφυρα for γέφυρα, κριδδέμεν for γελᾶν; the foreigners themselves are silent).

10. *Theopompus*

There are no ancient comments on the language or style of Theopompus. From the fragments it is clear that stylistic parody played a prominent role in his work. In one parodically high-flown fragment (fr. 4, with uncontracted χρυσέαν and the pronoun νιν), the diction of the dithyrambist Telestes was ridiculed because he had used the word ἄκατος 'boat' for some kind of cup. Both the simplex form ἴξῃ in fr. 18 and the plural δόρη in fr. 26 may also point to a parodic context. In fr. 33 a cup is addressed paratragically, in fr. 17 there seems to be a parody of (Platonic) philosophical discourse turning around the concept of the ἕν (for this kind of parody cf. [Epich.] fr. 277), and the hexametric fr. 31 is inspired by epic poetry (cf. unaugmented δῶκε, the Homeric formula υἷας Ἀχαιῶν, or the verb ἐρεείνω 'to ask for'). To judge from Theopompus' titles, this interest in Homeric poetry was common throughout his work (Ὀδυσσεύς, Πηνελόπη, Σειρῆνες). A formulaic expression borrowed from medical writings has been detected in fr. 63 (ταῦτ' ἢν ποῇς, ῥᾴων ἔσει τὴν οὐσίαν).

Original Theopompean word formations include the nouns ὀγκάς 'brayer', built on the model of φυγάς (fr. 5), and ἐμβαδᾶς (after bird

names in -ᾶς; cf. Ar. *Av.* 288, Myrtilus fr. 5 καταφαγᾶς, fr. com. adesp. 197 τρεσᾶς, χεσᾶς) for Socrates' enemy Anytus, who fabricated shoes (ἐμβάδες). Whether Theopompus is responsible for the solecism γεγράφηκεν remains uncertain (fr. dub. 104).

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